

喬林 知

Tomo Takabayashi Presents



今日から このまま自由業!

You Are The Maoh From Today On!

Tomo Takabayashi

Novel Illustrations / Matsumoto Temari

[Return to MA Series](#) [Forward to Prologue](#)

Character Introduction



Conrad

"Lord Weller Conrart"

The second son of the previous Maou, and someone who understands Yuuri well. He has such an open mind that it's almost impossible to think that he's a citizen of such a strange world.

Adalbert

"Von Grantz Adalbert"

A mysterious person who assists the humans and is hostile towards the mazoku. For some reason he's amiable (?) towards Yuuri but...

Yuuri

"Shibuya Yuuri"

A senior high school student with an unusual penchant for justice. He's 15 years old. He assumes the position of the 27th Maou at this time - What will he do?

Günter

"Lord von Christ Günter"

A noble who serves Yuuri as an advisor. In other words, the person in charge of the Maou's education. He can be a little overprotective.

Wolfram

"Lord von Bielefeld Wolfram"

The previous Maou's third son. A beautiful boy who is just as prideful as he is selfish.

Gwendal

"Lord von Voltaire Gwendal"

The previous Maou's eldest son. He's a level-headed, cynical and very handsome man.

Cherie

"Lady von Spitzberg Cäcilie"

The 26th Maou. She is the former Maou because she abdicated. She has the pheromones of a sexy lady but she's truly the mother of three mazoku sons.

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Prologue

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角川ビーンズ文庫

Listen, Yuu-chan.

Well, Yuu-chan, about your name, when Mama was standing on a street corner in Boston - I was worrying, "He's going to be born any minute, what should I do?" But then a super cool fencer in a taxi kindly let me ride with him, and he tried to comfort me by saying, "A child that gets through the summer will grow strong, so giving birth in July is a blessing. In the village I grew up in, July is called Yuuri." And because he had such a refreshingly sweet smile, I immediately decided to make it your name. So Yuu-chan, even though your Papa works at the bank and you're always grumbling about "interest rates" or "good profits", never think that you're named after "interest" or "profits"!

Right, Yuu-chan? You're Yuuri because you were born in July. Isn't it cute? Don't you feel your mama's love? You're Yuuri because you were born in July, isn't it dreamy? Doesn't it seem like something beautiful from a girl's manga? Yuuri. Ah, it's wonderful, I feel sparkly.

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Chapter 1

今日から
100%自由業!



If that's the case, then why did she use those kanji?!

Since junior high my old enemies, some delinquents, would always call me "Fuuri (Disadvantage)" during fights, so I've gotten used to eluding abusive language.

"Say something Shibuya[1] Yuuri[2] (Advantageous)!"

"Don't you mean Harajuku[1] Fuuri[2] (Disadvantageous)"

I've heard that cliché 50,000 times. By the way, I was born 15 years ago. That's right, my name is Shibuya Yuuri (Advantageous). Not Yuuri (abundant village) nor Yuuri (gentle pear tree) but Shibuya "Yuuri (Advantageous)". The name of my brother, who is five years older than me, is Shibuya Shouri (Victory). It's written as Shouri (Victory) and reads as Shouri, and even if it looks a little like "Katsutoshi (to win, same kanji)", it's not.

With the fresh leaves of May growing thick, I was in the middle of returning home from school on my bicycle.

Up until now I've looked up to a member of the middle school baseball team, but now I also look up to another senior on the kendo team, so I was talking about becoming a member of the kendo team just five minutes ago before I rode my bicycle away from my friend. I was stepping on the pedals in a good mood, heading through a quiet park near my home, when I happened across a serious scene.

Collecting money.

That's only what the bullies who practice it call it, but it's really plain old mugging. Today of all days I knew all three of them, the assailants and the victim, from samiddle (the same middle school?), and the one in glasses who was being pushed up against the back wall of the bathrooms, Murata Ken, was in the same class as me in the second and third year of middle school.

Now wouldn't be a bad time to leave on my bike, especially since no one's noticed me. If I pass by quickly, Murata wouldn't ever know it was me. It's not like he's really my friend, and I've never really talked to him. Besides, even if I did seem like an ally of justice, no one is looking hopefully or gratefully this

way...ah...I slowly stopped my bicycle.

A-Ah, it's no good...my eyes met with Murata Ken's.

"...What are you doing over there? Perhaps doing something illegal together?"

And so, I, Shibuya Yuuri, decided to deal with two delinquents, and for what I guess is the 50,000th time I heard, "Well, is it Harajuku Fuuri?!" All thanks to this small-town sense of justice I was born with. Mugging people is a crime, and fighting two on one is unfair by my ethics.

"We're just 'collecting money'. Whatever money is in that guy's wallet, so that's legitimately collecting money, right?"

Please, pull out a map and show me, in what country is this legal?

With navy blue and gray uniforms, the two high school students who had fair hair and matching contacts could have been said to have no nationality[3] at all. They kicked me in the stomach and pinned me roughly against the mortar wall.

"Now look, our prey ran off because you were talking too much. Well? You're the banker's son, so shouldn't you know how valuable a customer is?!"

It's true. Oh, hell! I was going to save Murata Ken, and then he turned around and ran away at full speed. But I'm cute, I'll look around for assistance. But at 4:30 in the afternoon only grade school students are in the park.

"Why did you come save that guy? Are you friends? Or is it a secret crush?"

"Shut up! Ken is my favorite name, and Tsutomu and Ken are my top favorite names."

Secretly, the teacher whom I admire is named 'Tsutomu', and my favourite actor in historical dramas is 'Matsudaira Ken'.

"Ah? It's your favorite name? Shibuya Yuuri Harajuku Fuuri?!"

When they started laughing I tried to gain a tactical advantage. I was drawing out my fists and kneeing them when Delinquent A grabbed my hair and pulled me into the dim bathroom.

"Hey, wait...you...ah, wasn't this marked as the ladies' bathroom?!"

"Is that so? Hunn, well, that's fine. There's a lot more stalls, so we can have our

privacy. That's important."

"That's right, it's for our privacy. We want to keep a secret a secret."

Delinquent B matched his tone to his actions, and he began to look for a wallet from the snatched backpack.[\[4\]](#) The blue strap was cut, causing a mobile phone to tumble out; it began to ring as soon as it hit the wall.

"...What's this ringtone, have you heard it?"

"No. Aah, what is this, it feels like I've heard it somewhere...oh, I can't remember...like something from television. I'd guess from a historical play?"

"About that, who makes ringtones from historical plays other than the recent ones by Mito Komon? Moreover, isn't that a professional baseball strap? I don't believe it, Shibuya Yuuri, what is this about, Shibuya Yuuri?"

"Shut up! What do you know about the virtues of baseball?! Ah, hey, you..."

Delinquent B began pulling out money. It was a pair of Souseki-senseis.[\[5\]](#)

"What is this?! You have to be joking, are you really a banker's son?! Your father must be hesitant to lend you money because you are, but I thought you'd have more than this. He's doesn't want to loan you money,[\[6\]](#) Shibuya-chan."

"I'm not connected to my parent's business."

I didn't think to tell them, but I usually had about 500 yen[\[7\]](#) in my possession. He gives me change steadily, but it's barely enough to use at a vending machine, and my savings are gone in the blink of an eye.

"Ah, ah, think of it as the bank making a special loan to Murata, two blue bills[\[8\]](#) isn't enough. 20,000 yen at least, 20,000."

Suddenly his grip on my hair strengthened. Currently there were three light blue doors reserved in the lady's restroom. I was dragged to the center one, and kneed roughly in the back. The toilets didn't look like what I'd been told, and a Western-style toilet was in front of me.

"Hey, no way, you guys...aren't delinquents of ten years ago, so..."

"For someone who passed the entrance exams[\[9\]](#) you're not very quick-witted, so how about we teach you not to have a smart mouth for future reference?"

Surely they won't really dunk my face in the toilet. Even if these guys were junior high school delinquents, it's the year 2000 AD, who uses such old-fashioned bullying?!

"If you get in our way, should we kill you? Next time it'll be serious."

As I feared, my rivals pushed my head towards the toilet. It seems like right now old-fashioned things are back in style.

I tried to hold up my neck, but I decided I had about 10 seconds to be prepared.

But a toilet! If I thought about a different type of face-washing vessel the function is the same. The water began to flow over my chin as it was pushed in. I tried to lift my head as a reaction, but the pressure at the back of my head didn't loosen at all. I gave up, took a deep breath, and stiffened my body.



After the toilets were modernized, there wasn't anyone who'd been dunked in the toilets. If that's true, then I should get in the Guinness Book of World Records. In other words, for just a few dozen seconds, if I closed my eyes and held my breath, even if they push me in, and even if my head is pulled...huh?

Either Delinquent A or Delinquent B's hand held me from above as usual. But some other force was sucking me in, like there was a black hole in the middle of the toilet!

Is this a joke?! What hidden power brand name toilets have! It must be the ultimate secret of a strong cleaner! I couldn't fight it any longer, and while my head and shoulders and hips were painfully sucked in I, Shibuya Yuuri, thought with a scream:

Is it possible, this is the first time this has ever happened?!

For the first time ever, a man was flushed down a toilet?!

Hey, Papa.

What is it, Yuuri?

When we come to Disneyland why do we only go on the "Star Tours"?

What, you don't like the Star Tours, Yuuri?

It's not that I don't like it, I love it! But I at least already know all the lines of the "droid" that is the "pilot", how many times have we ridden it?

That's great, Yuuri! So you already remember all the lines the pilot droid has? Well then, Yuuri, just to make certain that it's correct, let's ride the Star Tours once more! Because someday when you grow up, this will definitely be useful.

That was certainly useful!

As my vision began to return faintly, I expressed my gratitude to my father after a long time. Even though he probably never predicted that his son would be flushed down a toilet over ten years ago, riding Star Tours at Disneyland in Tokyo 10 times in rapid succession was certainly useful.

After whirling down the flushing toilet, the scene I saw in that clear water was just like repeating what I had seen in my childhood. The droid shouted, and then we warped. The light became grainy and the stars were stretched into lines, and distorted, and then shrunk again into normal stars. My body was extended, distorted and then shrunk again...

Not really.

I could never really be flushed down a toilet. Besides, my body grew adequately, and I'm about the size of the average freshman.

I stretched out my arms and legs as much as possible, and triumphantly became spread eagle. The dirt road didn't go away after a long time. But the sky was nothing but blue. It was the clear blue sky of an area without things like air pollution or depletion of the ozone layer, with clear air and blue sky. When I tilted my head, I saw green on both sides of the road. At my left hand were woods where the trees grew thick, and at my right hand was a meadow stretching in a slope with a private house. The house seemed like it was made of stone, and in the distance animals could vaguely be seen. Goats or...sheep, I guess.

Because of those bullies, my face was shoved into a toilet and I was dragged into a place that didn't seem to be inhabited, and I instantly panicked.

But, where is this? The scenery was entirely unlike modern Japan, and I muttered while sitting up.

"...The Alps?"

Like that girl Heidi. Even though I couldn't figure out how I got transported here.

As I quietly realized that my uniform was damp I got a seriously bad feeling. When I thought about this moisture carefully, it might be from the public bathroom...I'd better stop thinking so much. Water is water, there's nothing different about H₂O.

On the other side of the road a young lady carrying a large piece of luggage was walking. Both of her hands were under a wicker basket, but it fell from both hands at the same time. The sound of the fruits that were too large to be called

apples tumbling onto the road rose up into the air.

"Umm....."

I began speaking and took a deep breath. Her eyes stared in my direction. And mine were looking at her, too. Some words rose in my head.

A costume player (or cosplayer to abbreviate).

The length of the long skirt that seemed to be dragging on the ground. The old-fashioned triangular straps tied at her chin. Those blue eyes and dull blonde hair...a foreigner! But why was a foreigner in a long apron dress that seemed like that Heidi girl of the Alps climbing up the hill carrying luggage? As the girl dropped her basket, she pointed in this direction and began screaming something.

"Ah, umm, excuse me, I'm really sorry if I surprised you. It's just that I've been dumped at this place, you really don't need to feel like I'll harm you or threaten you..."

Her voice substituted for a siren, and one by one people ran out of the stone fairy-tale houses, quickly climbing up the slope. There were men and women and children. All the people were the same.

"...Every...everyone is cosplaying?"

No, these people definitely weren't modern day Japanese people. To begin with, all of them were foreigners. If you look at us Japanese, the natural blonde hair and natural brown hair, natural blue eyes and natural split chin, I could only think they were a different race. Ten or more people gathered around holding useful farming equipment like ploughs or hoes or sickles. When the girl kept screaming, I couldn't understand the meaning as I watched her, frozen.

"Wait a minute, really, please wait a minute, I was just dumped here. Umm, what's a better word for it, eh...abandoned! I was just abandoned here! Ah...ah, I know! I haven't solved the entire puzzle."

My brains and tongue rotated in a state of emergency. The houses didn't look like Japan and the people were cosplaying. All of the factors came together in me.

"A theme park?!"

That's right. Foreigners in cosplay, an outlandish town; if this the type of place was used in two hour suspense dramas, wouldn't it have to be a theme park?

"Well, that's probably it. I'm stupid for not realizing it right away. I was abandoned in a theme park. But, even so, where is this? Is there a place in Niigata with a Russian atmosphere? Even if that's true, that's a long way to be abandoned from where I live...ow, ah, why is everyone in the Russian village, wait, why, rocks, and things?! Ow!"

Everyone working at the theme park must have been foreigners knowledgeable of Japanese foolishness. Nevertheless, why did they start throwing stones this way while I was frantically explaining?! Even if I didn't pay the entrance fee, throwing stones and setting up farming tools (they can be used as deadly weapons) is a bit of an over-reaction.

"Ah, umm, my wallet was taken a little while ago so I didn't pay the entrance fee, but I'll definitely do it in the future. If someone will lend me a phone, I'll do it by the end of today."

The end of today?

I was holding my arms over my head as I avoided stones and mud, and I pretended not to see the peasants wielding giant fork-looking spades. I thought as I absentmindedly saw an infant begin to weep with a frightened face while looking at me.

The infinite blue sky? When I was arguing with the delinquents, wasn't it past 4 in the afternoon? It's possible to consider that I was unconscious for 15 hours. But no one found me during that time? Even the theme park's security? Furthermore, even in the May weather, my uniform was still really wet. What in the world happened to me?! My head is so full of questions it felt like it was weighed to the ground. Even though I'm receiving this unjust stoning, no one is helping me.

I heard a strong voice give orders, and I lifted up my head a lot. Thankfully, the shower of stones ceased.

"Who..."

I was going to ask who it was, but then I saw a man on horseback and my words were stopped. His costume design wasn't different than the villagers, but the brilliance and texture of his clothes were obviously of a different quality, and he dismounted from his horse with excessive action and took two steps this way.

American football, this man absolutely must play American football. His arms and chest seemed that way. With dazzling hair and turquoise blue eyes, a fine, long hooked nose even though it inclined to the left a little, he seemed to be a beautiful Caucasian macho man with a split chin. Foreigner-loving Japanese girls would probably form a line asking for photographs in this place, and if necessary they would probably put money in his bikini pants.

The fault of this particular Caucasian was his huge nostrils on his triangular nose.

Secretly I think of him as 'Denver Broncos', that's the only NFL team that I know. He said a few words to the villagers, and then he knelt down and peered at me.

"...Umm...seriously, thank you, for calming down everyone..."

His huge hands, which balanced out his figure, grabbed my head firmly.

I thought he was going to throw a 90 yard long pass like this. Furthermore he could probably get a touchdown like that. But as he gripped my frontal lobe (no way) he didn't throw me, and with the power he put in his fingers I couldn't move for a minute.

"...Ow..."

As the pain hit me from five places I unintentionally raised my voice. You might call it shock more than pain. [10]I was more afraid from the shock that he would close his fingers too strongly by mistake than in pain. Finally the man separated his hands. A stream of sound flowed in at the same time. The root from my ear to my brain hurt as if water had gotten in it.

Wind, trees, cries of the animals, cries of the baby that sounded like an animal, and words.

Suddenly everyone began speaking Japanese. What, everyone can speak Japanese?! That's it, they're workers away from home (and probably taking their

families) who came to Japan to work with tourists,[11] so they're sure to have mastered everyday conversation. If that's the case, why did they keep speaking Russian (?) until now? What rude people. The beautiful macho man laughed.

"How is that? Can you understand us now?"

"Aah, it's strange to see a foreigner speak fluent Japanese."

My tension was relieved a little bit when I understood him. At any rate, I needed to understand the situation. To make it easier for them to understand, I tried to ask in a fake foreign accent.

"And, I'm not sure how I got here, or where or what time it is...ah, but we can find out the time from a clock... Umm...[12] Excuse me, where is this? How can I get back home?"

"What..."

Denver Broncos (or otherwise American football guy) put both hands on his waist and looked down at me.

"Just when this one looked good, this Maou is just an idiot?"

Idiot?

"...How can you call an easily hurt young boy an idiot the first time you meet him?"

My bad habit reared its ugly head. When I was a grade school child, my brain functions became overcharged and a red switch would flip on and off, and I'd begin speaking with terrible vigor. My fourth grade music teacher was impressed that I could ramble until I thought of something to say. She nicknamed me Turkish March. Only she called me that before or after.

"Certainly my enrollment in a prefectural high school is not really because I surpassed the results of anyone or am someone to be jealous of. Even a child returning to his home country can be persistent, but I was in Boston for half a year after I was born. All the same, I'm not an idiot, what's with calling me an 'idiot' all of the sudden? If you look, my father is an elite banker, and my brother is a student at Hitotsubashi."

I try to cover up my mediocre self by bringing up my family pride.

"By the way, my mother graduated from Ferris!"

"Fe...what? Is that a rural aristocrat somewhere?"

That was the response, and I found myself at a loss for words. Questions of academic background weren't effective globally.

"Even so..."

Even so, the actors of a theme park shouldn't call their guests 'idiots'. Basically for people who work in the service industry, customers are gods. Somehow I stood up to preach about typical Japanese economic methods.

The people playing the villagers yelled abnormally.

"The demon stood up!"

"It's a genuine demon wearing black that stood up hurry and take the children inside!"

"It's already useless this village will be burned down like Kentenau twenty years ago."

"Wait this one is still young and unarmed and if you can get a person with black hair and eyes I hear you can get the power of eternal youth in the country to the west they're offering a reward."

"Ah I've heard about that too on at least one small island you could buy an eyebrow."

"Be careful even if he's unarmed this guy is a demon he should be able to use Majutsu."[\[13\]](#)

"No Adalbert-sama is with us Adalbert-sama please protect this village please confine us with God's power so that this demon can't reach us."

What are these people saying! I can't figure out where to put punctuation marks even if they're speaking Japanese, it's not entering my head smoothly. Unconsciously I checked my right wrist. It had a solid and clunky G-shock.[\[14\]](#) I don't know if it'll work, but if I hit someone with it I might get a little power boost. Wait, how can I hit someone, wait a minute, what am I thinking! But, these guys are looking at me with hostility, and everyone has the right to defend themselves. It's a state of emergency, no, it might be called an emergency

evacuation. So, self-defense should be ok? I'm completely panicking.

The villagers picked up their dangerous weapons again, sidling up with desperate looks. The guy called Adalbert didn't have farming tools or stones in his hands. Instead, he was wearing a long sword on his hip. The man that seemed to have a lot of attack power said:

"Well, settle down all of you. This guy hasn't learned anything yet. We could persuade him before it's too late..."

When my back was turned, I heard the sound of something rhythmic. The sound grew rapidly and everyone was bewildered. I figured it out by listening. The sound of hooves. Several horses kicking the ground as they galloped, a powerful clatter like an earth tremor, the sound of hooves.

"Yuuri!"

I looked back as my name was called. A nobleman riding a white horse, coming to save me...

"...Gah..."

It's understandable that with my first impression I finished with "gah". It wasn't just three knights or noblemen riding white horses, but when I turned my gaze towards the sky a little bit, I saw something outrageous approaching. "Something" flew up there. In fifteen years and nine months, I could never imagine something like that.

It was a skeleton, tawny brown from age, and it seemed like oil paper attached to a bamboo frame had grown into wings. Moreover it flapped like a shuttlecock, and flew in the sky as if it was natural.

If you attach wings to a skeleton, it can fly?

It is wonderful, wonderful and elaborately made. I couldn't see any piano wire, or hovering devices or propellers that would keep it afloat. I wonder how this device works.

"Get away from him, Adalbert!"

The three rescuing knights rode close to the chestnut[15] with star on its forehead, and they seemed to be soldiers with their swords drawn. But then, if I

call it a chestnut like the JRA[16] would, the villagers won't understand. The young man seemed to be the leader, even though I couldn't see his face his voice controlled the two following people.

"Don't draw your swords at the villagers! They aren't soldiers."

"But, Your Excellency-"

"Disperse!"

The three horses forced their way through the people working as villagers, neighed, and reared up. I covered my mouth from the cloud of dust and coughed miserably. Inside the beige mist, there were blue and orange sparks. Followed by clunking, the sound of metal striking each other heavily, the villagers trying to escape, the confused screams, and the sound of grass.

Someone grabbed my arms. Slowly the surrounding scene became vague.

"Von Grantz Adalbert! Why did you approach our border?!"

"You're the same as ever, Lord Weller, a hero among cowards!"

Ah, I get it. It's like a rule in mock battles, that they can't fight until they introduce themselves? As I'm was thinking that, my body was slowly lifted off the ground. The dust cleared away from the slope, the cavalry chasing away the villagers, and the young man who jumped off his horse to face the American guy with his sword. When I thought that the ground was becoming distant, I was suddenly turned away from that place and being flown away. My arms hurt from being suspended with my body weight.

"How am I flying...you're kidding?!"

Holding both my arms and transporting me was the skeleton device that was so elaborate that I couldn't figure it out. The tawny oil-paper wings flapped, chattering and flying forward. Wasn't it just a skeleton that had wings attached to it? Even if I looked up from right under its spine it was a jawbone and skull with no expression, and dark caves in the eye part of the face looked down.

"What should I say, thanks."

Even though I was being abducted, I wanted to at least express my gratitude, and I tried with all my might. It seemed that if it lost strength for even a minute it

would fall. The flying skeleton desperately flapped its wings as it clattered. Adalbert made a fleeting glance this way, and remarked as he fought with Lord Weller, who seemed to be the leader of the soldiers.

"How clever! Using kotsuhi to transport him!"

"They are loyal to us, and don't lose themselves to personal grudges."

"And how about you, Lord Weller? Woah!"

From what I could see from twisting my neck and looking, Mister Brawns[17] who was called Adalbert, barely avoided the tip of the sword of the leader called Lord Weller.

"Don't you think your skills are too good to use for those guys?"

"Unfortunately, Adalbert,"

I could only see the Lord Weller's khaki back and dark brown head. Somehow I knew that he smiled that moment.

"My love isn't as single-minded as yours."

When his subordinates returned from driving away all of the villagers, and they drew their swords out at the same time. Adalbert jumped onto his horse, and called out to me as I moved at the height of the trees.

"Be patient for a while, I'll come save you soon!"

"Save...am I being kidnapped by the good guys or bad guys right now?!"

Under my eyes, the leader with brown hair stopped the soldiers that were trying to chase their enemy.

"Stop, don't chase him too far!"

"He is alone. I thought we should use his disadvantage, if we can catch up to him now..."

Lord Weller (I still haven't seen his face) ordered strictly. So cooool. "Right now our top priority is taking His Majesty's body to safety."

Taking His Majesty's body to safety, does this mean this has turned into like a super-kabuki show? As I was participating in the super original theme park, with the super elaborate attractions, I secretly muttered as His Majesty.

"...Can you get me down from this super well-made sky ride for the time being?"

(Translated by Emeryl, originally posted on [Onadoru Euphoria](#). Re-posted with permission.)

[Back to Prologue](#) [Return to MA Series](#) [Forward to Chapter 2](#)

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Chapter 2

"Your Majesty!" that man said.

With long, thick silver hair and violet eyes, his body was about 9 times the length of his head.

I couldn't dismount alone, with my butt restrained on the horse's back, and I didn't know what to answer. What would be the best answer to being called 'Your Majesty'? Moreover, he was a super beauty at the prime of manhood at around thirty!

Since I'm lacking vocabulary and my CPU is running especially slow, I can't adequately describe this man's beauty. The average high school freshman wasn't used to being around such beauties often, much less men who clearly weren't Japanese like this man standing in front of me.

I clung to Lord Weller's back for what I would say was the rest of the day. We finally arrived at a small-scale village with wooden buildings after I had my first grueling experience of riding horseback. There were about fifteen houses, and it might be called a neighborhood association[1] more than a village. From a different direction, armed soldiers returned to the entrance one by one from the forest a little further away. The scary thing was that "Fly, skeleton!" had followed our party without fail. I would have never thought it, but maybe he's the mascot character of this theme park?

If that's so then it was bad taste-well, an original innovation.

The soldiers crossed the center of the village, and when they came to a large (I would only say about 4LDK[2]) house, the door opened forcefully and a man rushed out.

The moment I saw his face I gave up on saying anything. He was handsome, more handsome, super handsome, and ultra some hand, I mean, handsome.[3] I

would say his graceful expression makes his cleverness felt. What a smart-looking incredibly beautiful person! But such a dull expression.

In addition to being beautiful, his voice was a baritone that vibrated in your stomach. Adalbert from awhile ago was also fairly handsome but this person was so perfect that girls would faint as soon as they laid eyes on him. It wouldn't only be girls in their late twenties who would faint. Mature women, and older women...well, ladies in general.

"Conrart, hurry and give His Majesty a hand..."

"Alright. Your Majesty, lean your body this way, and please dismount slowly, very slowly."

It seemed like Lord Weller's name was Conrart. I was finally liberated from the horse, and both of my feet touched the flat ground. I still felt a little unsettled from going up and down.

"Ah, Your Majesty, thank goodness you're safe! I, von Christ, have been anxiously waiting for this day when we could meet."

While he spoke in a dramatic manner, he knelt on the ground. I stepped back, startled. When I moved, suddenly my butt hurt and I smacked my lips, and the beautiful man's expression changed.

"Your Majesty, are you hurt somewhere?! Conrart, even though you were with him..."

"Your bottom hurts, doesn't it, Your Majesty? Because this is your first time riding a horse."

Ne, wha. I was puzzled by his sweet smile. But, the beautiful man who introduced himself as von Christ wasn't smiling.

"First time?! They don't teach horse riding in their elementary schools? Why did Shinou send His Majesty to that sort of world..."

"This isn't the time to talk about that, Günter. Von Grantz reached him ahead of me."

"Adalbert! Your Majesty, did they do anything to you?!"

"...They threw stones and came towards me with hoes and plows but..."

"How horrible! Those humans...but, Your Majesty...our language, how..."

It seemed he wanted to ask how I understood their language. I limply waved my right hand, and tried not to smile.

"Not at all, you're all very skilled at Japanese. You don't have to worry so much about me understanding, or be so modest. I'm surprised by how fluently all the characters that have already appeared can speak. Awesome, bravo, viva the actor spirit! How many years have you been in Japan? Which country are you from?"

Von Christ (family name) Günter (name) had a dubious face.

"Country...I'm..from here."

"You were born in Japan?!"

At that time, Lord Weller said something shocking.



"Your Majesty, this isn't Japan."

"Ah, you see, I knew you weren't born in Japan, right? If that's the case then this is... huh..."

What?

This isn't Japan?

Right now, did he just say this isn't Japan?

"Then, why is everyone speaking Japanese?"

"We aren't."

At this time, I carefully looked over Lord Weller from the front for the first time. He had the stature of about a nineteen or twenty year old, and unlike the villagers his garments were functional. The khaki leather belt and boots looked like they were influenced by television and movies, and seemed to be a military uniform of a country somewhere.

He had rather short dark brown hair, and eyes that were hazel with silver speckles. An old scar was left next to his eyebrow. He didn't just have scars there, but on both his hands and fingers as well. He placed one of those hands on my shoulder, and he purposely gazed down at me.

"This isn't Japan, Yuuri. Saying nothing of Japan, this isn't the world you were born in."

As I was being informed of something so shocking, I absentmindedly thought about something else. Ah, I understand this man. If someone asked me to tell them about this guy, I'd probably be able to explain him pretty well for sure.

That is to say Lord Conrart Weller seemed to be like the person that the audience gives a standing ovation for when he unintentionally strikes a heroic pose in the center court of Wimbledon. But he isn't blessed like that because of his facial features. When compared to Günter and Adalbert, he is plain, and he's probably the type that could do various minor roles in Hollywood. But this person's expression is the result of the life he's lived up to now. It wasn't God's love or an artist's mold, but his own lifestyle.

That's what I would say about this guy, Conrad. I have a hunch I could tell someone that.

"Conrad...no, umm, Conrart."

"Eh? Ah, if you're used to English, Conrad is easier to pronounce. Some of my friends call me that, too."

"Have I met you somewhere before?"

After he thought for a moment, Conrad shook his head.

"No."

The man with silver hair and violet eyes was reaching a mature beauty.[\[4\]](#)

"Anyway, Your Majesty, we can't talk in a place like this. It's not a very clean place, but let's please go inside."

While he said something selfish about another person's house, Günter pushed my back. When I turned my head by chance, the residents of this village seemed to be glued to the cloudy windows of the simple wooden houses, eavesdropping on my situation.

The room had a warm heat stove, and it was a welcome environment for me since my uniform was still damp. Even though just a bit ago it was May in Japan, where I am now, what month is it here?! I couldn't tell if it's west or east from the dirty window, but an orange light from the setting sun was shining in.

I was half dried from getting flushed down the toilet in the park; if it was a Japanese house I'd quickly take a bath.

I took off my jacket that felt icky and damp, and stretched out near the fire. Günter seemed to be moved deeply by that.

"Your Majesty, do you usually wear black? How wonderful, how wonderfully suiting! Normally only people born as kings or very close to the king wear black. That noble black hair and those black eyes, certainly you are Our Majesty!"

"...Even if you say that, it's just a uniform, a schoolboy's uniform...besides, most Japanese people have black hair and black eyes when they're born..."

Though, it changes with the color of the skin according to each stage of life.

Like the so-called tanned look that was popular for awhile before Matsuzaki Shigeru. In my case my hair had finally grown out in the middle of my third year of junior high, after[5] I wasn't a baseball team member. I was just starting to think about cutting it when summer vacation arrived.

"Uniform? Did you call this jacket a uniform? I see, this must be made by the most skilled craftsman especially for Your Majesty."

They're actually mass produced in a factory. It was the most used thing among junior high school and high school boys country-wide in Japan. Moreover, it was a little small for my present size because I'd been wearing it for three years.

"Your Majesty, you probably think that it's cold, and even though it seems that way it's spring in this country."

Conrad said that and took a position by the door. He seemed to take the role of lookout, folding his arms and resting his head against the wall as his sword leaned. He closed his eyes softly.

I uselessly moved my chair as close to the fire as possible, which was connected to a table of a rough rustic make that you could only find in folk craft shops in the recesses of the mountains. An unsteady lamp seemed to be in the mountain hut where an electric light would usually be hanging from the ceiling.

"...Creating minute details up to the season...what an elaborate attraction..."

"It's not an attraction."

I was corrected by Conrad as his eyes were closed.

"Even if you tell me that, I can't believe it! Right now, inside of me, it's either one: this is an elaborate money absorbing theme park attraction, two: this is one of those surprise shows that's often on TV, or three: this will all turn out to be a dream. Which is it? Well, pick one. I hope it's three."

Conrad didn't answer, but in front of me Günter had a worried face, and after he muttered a word that he wasn't familiar with he turned to me.

"Teper...surprise..? Please wait Your Majesty, and explain in order. Please be calm, and please do not test me with your foreign words."

"Ok, I'm calm. So much has happened that even if you say that you're my

mother, I'll just clap my hands and laugh and call it an American joke."

When I raised both my hands and gave up, I sat facing Günter, and he firmly leaned forward and began to talk.

"Then I will tell you. Your Majesty, eighteen years ago, Your Majesty's spirit should have been born in this country. However, because of the post war chaos at that time, or fear that your Majesty's life might have been targeted internally, Shinou decided to send your soul to another world. So, according to the instructions of Shinou, we took Your Majesty's noble soul that hadn't been born yet to Earth. Your mother and your father created Your Majesty's body, and you've grown up in that world until today. However, while you should have originally been able to grow to adulthood safely in another world, you were summoned due to a situation..."

"Wait a minute, you're being too polite for me to understand.[\[6\]](#) Can you be more conversational?!"

"Please don't say such an unreasonable thing. Your Majesty is Your Majesty, we are just your vassals."

"Your Majesty, Your Majesty, my name is Yuuri, Shibuya Yuuri Harajuku Fuuri. I've called myself that for a long time. So, here is the development to now?! I was really supposed to be born in this country, but for whatever reason I was born and raised in another world. But because I have things to do, I was summoned here from Japan. Did I get that all right?"

"How wonderful, you followed it. I admire your intelligence."

To my despair, Günter nodded deeply, happily from the bottom of his heart.

Narnia,[\[7\]](#) I mean, I see, this is the same old story. It's in innumerable movies, and overused in anime and manga. Even though there's a variation in quality, it's in paperbacks and juvenile literature so often that it's not possible to count anymore. It wasn't anything original. However, it's rare for a person to actually be dragged into it. Moreover, to get dragged into it from a public bathroom is extremely rare.

"And, I was pulled into a tunnel to another world from the bathroom toilet, and was dropped on that mountain path."

"That's correct. By our calculations, you should have been able to be summoned inside our borders, and inside of our capital. However, perhaps due to some excess power, you were at a human village on the outskirts of our borders. It's inexcusable, Your Majesty. Of the people distributed along the borders in case of emergency, it's good that Conrart arrived in time. This land is part of our territory, so for the time being you don't have to worry. Please be at ease."

"Even if you tell me to be at ease, this probably wouldn't be an easy situation for you guys either. Are you sure I'm the person you're searching for? When you think about the population of Japan, isn't it possible you mistook me for someone else? I'm of about average looks and intelligence, and I don't have any unusual birthmarks-"

I didn't have any evidence of any special birthmarks anywhere on my body. If anything I only have a faint scar on my left elbow from when I was a kid.

"But, umm, Günter, san, I do have a scar from rubbing against the artificial grass from playing baseball on my left arm. I don't seem to have any natural marks on my body that are 'proof of being a king'..."

His intellectual appearance collapsed for a moment and became sweet. If I put it well it's like an actor answering passionately; if I put it badly it's like an owner talking about his cat.

"No, from the moment I first saw you I knew you were Our Majesty, I have no doubts about it! Since you have pure and noble black hair, and clear black eyes that aren't cloudy, and you were born with such a beautiful color to your body, and furthermore, you were wearing pitch black clothes, I cannot think it's anyone except you."

Geh, he said I was beautiful. Beautiful - maybe like him.

"Besides, it's even more clear since you're skilled in our language. What Adalbert did... to you was regrettable but...he drew out Your Majesty's stored language from the depths of your soul. Every soul has accumulated memories of its various "lives" that it has lived up to then. Of course, usually that door isn't opened, and people have to learn knowledge in their new "life". However, that man opened that door, and part of your sealed memories have been drawn out

forcibly. Using the way of those savage, cowardly, and dishonorable humans!"

At the rough tone of the explanation, I asked timidly.

"...That seems rather convenient."

"Not at all! Though it's good that only the part of the memory with your language skills was awakened, when I think of if unnecessary memories were revived. There isn't a person who wants to know all of his soul's travels."

There are a lot of people who want to know in Japan. From beside the door, Conrad calmly interjected.

"But about that thought, we're able to speak to His Majesty now thanks to that man's art. It's useless to worry about it until your veins pop out, Lord von Christ."

"...In order to teach Your Majesty about advanced noble language, I prepared the textbooks and rulers..."

His tone seemed sad from the bottom of his heart, but what worried me was what the rulers were for.[\[8\]](#) If they were for underlining text, no problem.

"At any rate, his stored language is evidence that His Majesty's soul was the one in this world. My confidence has changed into conviction now."

"Oh Günter...I heard that somewhere..."

Apparently, they didn't seem to have any doubts because they believed I was "Their Majesty".

But, usually in this type of scenario, a main character like a hero or savior or prince or princess solves the world's problems peacefully, and it has a wonderful happy ending. A famous author once said: If the story didn't have a happy ending it wouldn't be liked.

"I get it. Maybe it's impossible to believe, but in any case in order to finish this, I have to accept your offer, right? If that's the case then let's get this over with quickly. What is the mission that I was summoned for? What princess should I rescue? Where's the dragon I need to slay?"

"Dragon? A ryuu?![\[9\]](#) We would never slay a ryuu, their kind have been over-hunted by humans and are almost extinct, and we protect them."

So in this world, dragons are at the top of the red list.[\[10\]](#)

There were several knocks on the wooden door, and with sword in hand, Conrad cautiously opened the door narrowly. Children that were about ten years old stood there, and they looked up at him and grinned from ear to ear.

"Yo."

"Conrad! Will you teach us to throw, we can't aim well at all."

"And after that can you teach us how to hit, and how to finish?"

Though the parents weren't leaving their houses out of fear of the soldiers, it seemed it wasn't the same for the children. And to them, it wasn't Lord Weller or Your Excellency; they just addressed him as someone older.

"You guys, it's going to be pitch black soon, and we won't be able to see anything."

"It's still fine!"

"It'll still be ok."

He looked in my direction worriedly, and he left the room after he bowed his head.

"...If the children like him, he must be a good guy, that person."

"Yes, he's the number one soldier of our kingdom. He's my prize pupil."

"You're a teacher, umm, von Christ-san?"

"Please call me Günter. Of course, I am a teacher, and I'm also the adviser and assistant to Your Majesty."

"If you're a teacher then can you explain this to me briefly? Günter, what am I supposed to do in this world? What kind of troublesome enemy do I have to defeat so I can go home?"

"Humans."

The firewood in the heater crackled and popped.

"...Humans...then, that is, what kind of person..."

"It's not a person, Your Majesty. We will destroy all the humans who are

hostile towards our country, and burn their countries. For that reason we need a leader, so Your Majesty's power as a ruler is necessary."

Humans, destroy, and burn?

Destroy humans?!

I kicked the chair and ran to the back, but fell to the ground on my back. A flustered Günter rushed over to me.

"Are you ok, Your Majesty?"

"Uwah, wait! Did you say we should kill humans, Günter-san?! If that's true I'll be killed too! Because if you look at me I'm an ordinary human, no, wait, even when you say something like that, your face looks a bit human...you're a human, too."

"No matter where I look, Your Majesty is a Mazoku[11] like us. No, more than that, you're a being with noble black hair that should be respected! The chosen spirit was born into your dark body, that only Mazoku kings or people close to them have. However, your hair and eyes are both black, to appear as a human with both black..."

"Is a what like us?"

"Mazoku."

No way.

"...Then, what am I the king of?"

"You are the Maou." [12]

Maou.

Father, father, look, there's a "Honyara" [13] over there, I'm scared.

A Hakushon Dai "Honyara" [14]

Formerly, Yokohama's Dai "Honyara"

Huh, Hama's Dai "Honyara", I have a feeling there's something wrong with that answer.

To start with, what is a "honyara". [15]

I have a feeling they would curse, attack and kill humans, and be the boss of a terrible demon race.

Well, that is that, what am I the king of?

"Pull yourself together, You Majesty, please relax! Get a hold of yourself! You have become our hope, Your Majesty, the twenty-seventh Maou!"

Aah~, as I thought~, he's still calling me this Maou~. But twenty-seven is a good number~, 27~.

My shoulders were gripped and I was shaken roughly. I completely escaped reality from the residue of the shock. But this person, he said that I have to become a demon and beat humans to death. I could never do such a stupid thing, why isn't the enemy a slime or an evil sorcerer or a devil dragon or a big Maou, and, if I'm the Maou, then, am I on the bad guy's side in this world?! Then there's a human hero or savior somewhere, and the last boss that's going to be defeated in the final dungeon is me?! Damn-if that's the case I can't end it by hitting reset two or three times, I'll fight the hero with all my power! It won't be possible for him to get to the ending if he's not level 99, I'll fight to the end or...hey, I can't fight to the end, I'll die, I'm the last boss. When I'm in a pinch I'm usually quick-witted! I'll panic at the magic attacks of the enemy!

Aaah~ it's a lie~, someone please tell me this isn't true~!

"It's not a lie, Your Majesty! You are truly the Maou. Congratulations, from today on you are the Maou!"

What is there to congratulate?!

Outside, the sky was turning purple, and the remaining half was orange.

Only the fire from the lamps that were shaking unreliably leaked from the windows of the houses. The children had cheerful voices, and were moving around with vague smiles.

"Your Majesty?"

"Uwah, stop it, don't call me Your Majesty."

Conrad was leaning against the wall with his arms folded. Over by 3 steps there were some square pieces of wood, and next to that the ten year old children

were standing around. Apparently, judging from the stick they were holding in both hands, it seemed to be a game that's somewhere in between cricket and baseball. A piece of cloth was wound around the section of the strange, fat bat that was being gripped, there were two fielders behind the pitcher, and furthermore there wasn't a catcher anywhere.

"I don't know the rules of cricket, but who alternates next after one person hits it?"

"There are no alternates, this village only has five children."

Another was in the outfield. He was only a shadow because it was evening.

When the pitcher threw the something that looked like a ball, the batter made a dramatic miss. The ball hit the wall and rolled, Conrad picked it up and threw it back, and it progressed like so.

"You've struck out three times. Howell, take the place on the first base."

"Was that baseball?"

But, why would they have baseball in this sword and magic world... The child in the outfield ran up. The five children standing had good physiques and fair hair.

"Wait, wait, if this is baseball then why isn't there a catcher? Shouldn't you squat down?"

"It's not fair if an adult joins."

"No, that's not a problem, it's not a problem. Well, let's see, who is that outfielder. What is your name?"

"Brandon."

His voice was irritatingly hoarse, he was definitely in the middle of his voice changing.

"Well then, Brandon, you be the catcher. Look, squat over there, and catch the balls when they come. Aah, there aren't any mitts or gloves?!"

"Your Majesty...no, Yuuri-sama, this is a village of refugees that fled in from the other side of the border. They don't have a complete set of sports equipment."

The child shook free from my hand, and looks up at me with a frightened appearance.

"Your Majesty?! Conrad, did you call this person Your Majesty?! This is the scary person mother told me about?!"

"Brandon! This person will become our country's king. He's far from a scary person, he's the one who will kindly be defending your village."

Don't tell the children something I haven't even thought about.

"King?!"

But the five children gathered...four boys and a girl, knelt in place and covered their faces. Some of the children pressed their foreheads to the ground. I wouldn't say it looked like great respect.

"Please forgive us Your Highness, please don't chop off our heads, or burn down our houses."

"Howell, you didn't do anything wrong, so His Majesty has no reason to do such a thing. Look, Ema, raise your head."

"But the king... my father..."

As the girl recalled a painful memory, her voice rose and she cried. When several doors opened and mothers called out their names, the children all ran off towards their houses.

I picked up the ball at my feet. If the ball is this light and that was the pitcher, a mask and mitts might be unnecessary. The ball was a round leather bag softly stuffed with straw and sewn up, so it wasn't possible for the person who threw it to predict how it would curve.

"When I was their age, I used to play baseball until it got dark. And when it was night I'd have games and television, and I didn't have any free time to do homework."

"Children are like that in any country."

I stepped on the board that was substituting for home base.

"Hey, Conrad."

"Yes?"

"Is it true that I'm the king? Furthermore, I'm the head Maou scary enough to silence a crying child?"

"It's true. I'm not sure whether you're the head or not, but you are genuinely His Majesty, the twenty-seventh ruler of Shin Makoku."

"Then..I'll be chopping off people's heads too."

"It's not like that! I should have said this is a village of refugees. If I remember correctly, the winter six years ago, they were oppressed because of a religious misunderstanding and all the men were executed. The women and children came to the national border seeking protection, and we lent them this land with almost no taxation on the condition that they can't extend their farmland. It's the foolish king in the country of humans that they've deserted that killed their men and burned down their houses. But then..."

Conrad bit his lip, and seemed to look down regretfully.

"...I want you to remember that not all humans are like that. Well, Your Majesty, let's go inside. When it gets dark the temperature drops quickly. And Günter will lecture us."

The stars began to shine. The moon was still low. The light leaking from the windows was dim and unreliable.

There was nothing else shining. No neon signs or vending machines or convenience stores.

Where have I ended up?

"...What kind of trap have I fallen into?"

"But..this is your world."

Conrad smiled as he opened the door to the private house. Without any other source of light at dusk, even the light of the indoor lamp was like a searchlight turned sideways.

"Welcome home, Your Majesty."

This is the place where your soul should be.

Ah, what a different culture of food!

This thing called supper that I was given seemed like the leather of shoes that not even a dog would chew, dry bread that you could hit a nail with it even at normal temperatures, and some dried fruit that might have been better for the teeth if I licked it instead of biting it.

"This is food we carry for military use, so it's dry like this."

Günter insisted across from me, and I practiced chewing each mouthful thirty times silently. Though I was hungry to death, I wouldn't be able to swallow the dry meat if it wasn't chewed thoroughly.

The number one soldier, Conrad, seemed to be loved by the children, so it seemed like he was at Brandon's or Howell's or Ema's, or one of the other two children's whose names I didn't hear, house being treated to a meal.

"I want to go there too~"

"You can't go. The citizens of that village are human, what would you do if some man-made food hurt your body?"

"I'm a human so it's ok."

"No! How can you say that for certain when they planned such evil things? This Günter cannot let His Majesty's life be exposed to danger at all!"

And then, ah, the bedding culture was different!

Of course, I believed I would be able to borrow the best bedroom in this house from the residents. Because they call me the Maou, it seemed like I should be allowed to rest my tired body on a soft futon. Though, judging from what I've seen of the world here, it might be a bed rather than a futon. However, my question was answered by Günter with a matter-of-fact face.

"Why? Hey, just a minute, why do I have a sleeping bag, when just a little while ago a soldier went into a room with a soft bed?! Well, am I really a king? Shouldn't this sleeping bag have been dried properly in the sun before that?"

"If an insurgent breaks in targeting Your Majesty's life, the soldier you saw awhile ago is a substitute for you. There is no attack from the window if you're

here, and because Conrart fortified it, the entrance is safe."

"Your Majesty, tomorrow we'll be on horseback all day. Please take a long rest tonight and store your energy."

Even if he says to sleep soundly, there's not even a window in this cramped, dusty back room that I've been shut up in, spread out on this outdoor, tawny sleeping bag with barely any cotton stuffing... The floor is hard and the camping sleeping bag is made especially for tough guys. To make matters worse, it's my first experience being surrounded by handsome foreign men sleeping. Ah, sleeping like the "character of the river".[\[16\]](#) Even the king of a king game might have more freedom.

And then, ah, what a different culture of transportation!

In front of me, with my lack of sleep, five lively chestnut horses were drawn out. The early morning had perfectly clear air, and their snorting was hot and white.

"Horses again?!"

I was wearing my stiff school uniform, which had gotten wet and dried. I reached out my hand to the giant animal timidly. I was threatened with a "Uhhin"[\[17\]](#) and I withdrew.

"But since you're Mazoku, can't you use magic freely~?"

"Magic...you mean Majutsu?"[\[18\]](#)

"Yeah, that's right, magic. Why not use it to go to the capital? Or up to the castle? You can go blistering speeds without galloping on a horse, with magic bashu~n and you can skip to the end."

Like the anywhere door,[\[19\]](#) or bamboo copter, or something convenient like that.

Günter cleared his throat unnaturally and said,

"Your Majesty, Majutsu isn't for all purposes."

"Eh? From the television that I saw, witches and wizards only have to shake a staff and anything can be done, almost disregarding science."

"I don't know who wrote the play or stage drama 'Terebi', but that information is needlessly exaggerated. Majutsu is mostly useful for combat, and besides that, look, for extremely important circumstances, like summoning Your Majesty."

So television is different from reality. When I argued with him, "When you say it simply, it conserves energy." while being rubbed by a snout, Conrad said,

"Naturally, even if I, who doesn't have a fragment of magical power, say so, it won't be persuasive. Well, Your Majesty, will you ride with me or Günter? The horse-riding experience you mentioned yesterday..."

"I've barely even been on a merry-go-round."

"That's right, you've only had a little experience on a carousel. It'd take at least three days to reach the capital with such limited experience, so please keep riding behind me. Their burden will increase, but if we switches horses at relay stops they'll probably hold out."

"My butt hasn't even stopped hurting from yesterday yet...eh, how would you know what a carousel is?"

"Please be prepared. Today your front will probably also hurt."

The soldiers from earlier greeted them and left one by one. When I look up at the sky, it had the skeleton models just like yesterday. Of course, they're above us. Are they still the mascot character, what was it called? Kotsumohibimaru? Mr. Calcium?

"How about Kohhi? Yahoo~, Kohhi~, thank you for carrying me yesterday. I don't know if you're the same one, there isn't much difference."

I decided his name without permission, and waved my hand quietly. Then, his jaw made a clattering sound, and he repeatedly flapped his wings vigorously. It's awfully grotesque. I instinctively asked the person in charge of education.

"Uwah, it's mad! Is it possible for it to get mad?!"

"No, it was overcome with emotion when it was addressed by His Majesty's voice. Because they don't have the concept of "individuals", if you inform one of them you inform them as a whole. Because it's easy to communicate with the entire bone tribe, it's very useful on lookouts and scouts."

A lot of those words were hard to understand, but was he saying it's one for everyone, and everyone for one?

"Well, Your Majesty, we go soon too."

Conrad held the bridle in his right hand, and held out his left hand to me to pull me up.

Only the door of one house was narrowly opened, with a frightened villager who had blond hair peeping without showing his face.

"Ah~ ah!"

Facing that direction, I called out.

"What a waste! If you practice with a slightly heavier and harder ball, you'll become more skilled! And if the bat is cut more smoothly, and if the grip is thinner it should be easier to hit, and besides that..."

And still after that, don't they need a catcher?

"You have to have a catcher, for baseball~!"

I saw his mother grab him, and she closed the door frantically.

"I visit this village every now and then."

I give him some momentum so he can pull me up.

"Through this heart-breaking experience, the children are doing their best to grow up."

"Ah."

I can't even imagine my father being killed and my house being burnt down.

Günter had a discontent look on his face, but he struck the horse's stomach as he pretended not to look.

And that was the start of my first day of hell.

According to the G-shock that continued ticking away gallantly, running six hours from morning continuously, we transferred horses at places called relay spots about two times. At the third relay spot, in a village that was much larger than the villages before, the group tethered the horses to the outside fencing

and took a rest at Günter's signal.

"You've become very tired, haven't you? A bit ago your mutterings became incomprehensible, Your Majesty."

Because it was forced to run with Conrad's constant encouragement, I remembered the horse's name. While I was tumbling off of that hazel mare, Nokantei, I begged in a hoarse voice.

"Help me."

"Of course. When we've run halfway, I'll do it for you."

"No, right now."

"Then for the time being, let's replenish our calorie intake. In other words, lunch."

Although I should have descended to the ground, it entirely felt like riding a boat. To make matters worse, although it seemed to be the second month of spring, the sunlight was making me miss my refrigerator.

"I don't have an appetite. The nights are cold, noon is hot, and my throat is completely parched from dust, ah-"

I was presented with the object of my desire, and spontaneously reached out my hand and stopped panicking.

It looked like a shapeless glass that an amateur made on their first day in the classroom. It was filled with cold water to the edges, and frost and drops of water clung to the outside. This is definitely what I wanted now.

"...Cold water..."

"Your Majesty!"

Günter came my way at a quick pace. At any rate, he'll probably tell me not to eat or drink anything that was given to me by humans. But the girl holding out the tray of water to me was about ten years old, and her hair and eyes were violet. Everything other than that was the same color as a human, but, but...

"Are you a Mazoku?"

The girl nodded.

"Yes Your Majesty. If we can help His Majesty with the last drop that we possess, we'll be happy."

If that's true, then it's fine. She's a Mazoku, and I'm and the King of the Mazoku. I touched the glass with my fingers. As I thought, it's painfully cold. The person in charge of education said something.

"Your Majesty, please wait..."

The water disappeared from my hands, and when I looked up at my side Conrad had taken the glass and put it to his mouth. After he drank a mouthful he returned it. Shortly he only whispers, "Leave a little."

When I drank and returned the glass with only a little water left, the girl seemed glad, and she bowed deeply and ran away. The cold sensation in my throat quickly spread to my chest, just like the pain you get in your forehead when you eat shaved ice, and for just an instant my feet stagger. Suddenly my head was clear, and the surrounding greenery looked more vivid.

"...It seems like I was really thirsty. Like when you get dehydrated from midsummer activities."

"Being able to give water to His Majesty will definitely be the pride of that girl's life."

The man with the nice smile said something like that. But, I know scenes like this from historical plays. Just now he tasted it for poison. For my sake, he taste tested it.

The man in charge of education approached me with a seemingly shocked face.

"Your Majesty, even though I've told you not to eat anything other than what we've brought over and over..."

"But isn't this a completely Mazoku village? And hey, the people living here even look like you, and there's oddly a lot of beautiful men."

"While that may be true..."

Conrad unfastened the saddle on Nokantei, and lifted up the water to her like he would to a person.

"It didn't taste strange, and in case there was anything at the bottom that didn't melt, I had him leave the last mouthful. Even His Majesty isn't slow to understand, he only wanted his first drink to be cold. After that he can endure everything, the water from the water bags or portable food."

"Conrart, you support the common people too much."

"So what?"

Conrad spoke with a knowing face.

"If we don't support the people, then who will? Ah, of course..."

Nokantei chewed on his hair. Happily, and lovingly.

"If it would help His Majesty, without even mentioning my shoulder, I would give my hand or chest or even my life."

"...You don't need to give your chest or life."

"Don't say that."

"Lend me your Majutsu. It's already a state of emergency for me, so use your magic to skip me there with a bafyu~n. I've had enough of horses, I'm already tired of horses."

"In regards to a bit about magic. At any rate, didn't I tell you I have no magic power? The top magic user in our country, Günter, could help you."

He raised his eyebrows. Kyah~, Günter-sama's grieving form was so cool, too.

"Your Majesty's magic is several times more powerful than mine. At any rate, even gods are frightened when they speak of the power of the demon king."

"Wait a minute. I'm a human so I don't have any magic power or spiritual power."

"Your, Ma, jes, ty, is, a, Ma, zo, ku!"

"But I've never seen a ghost, or hit the lotto, or seen through a girl's bikini, or had a 10 yen coin move on a Kokkuri-san..."[20]

A confession. When I was in the fourth grade, I moved a ten yen coin on a Kokkuri-san myself after school. I was playing it with Nozawa, and he was so scared he cried, so I couldn't tell him I did it. I'm not sure what was

misunderstood, but Günter showed a smile of admiration.

"I would guess that's an advanced ritual of a foreign country? Though I can't understand its relation to Majutsu because of my ignorance...but it's fine, Your Majesty. Magic power is the disposition of the soul. Even if you can't use it now, everything in this world will become as you desire sooner or later."

Conrad, who doesn't seem to have any magic power either, gently brushed his favorite horse's muzzle slowly.

"Even though I cannot use it, I haven't felt inconvenienced. Well, that is given a long term view on it. For the time being, though, I'm worried about you riding a horse alone."

"Alone, me?!"

Nokantei shook her head excitedly, and drops of leftover water on her nose scattered. This, me?!

"No, of course, it goes without saying that you won't be going fast. It's fine if it's only after you enter the capital. Won't it be pathetic if the citizens are disappointed? They demand a strong, sublime, absolute ruler, so you absolutely have to ride a horse alone, or it won't be an impressive entry into the castle."

"Uwah...on this one?"

"No~. The best mare has been prepared~. I've raised her beloved daughter up to today, making every effort. Without a doubt she suits Your Majesty's jet black."

My dream of a noble riding a white horse was smashed.

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Chapter 3

There were countless lights from the shops lined up, and people bustling around busily and lively. An enormous gate opened up for us, and the guards on the other side stood at attention with serious expressions.

As his horse moved forward by my side, Günter spoke.

"Welcome home, Your Majesty. This is your, and our country. The eternal kingdom in which the wise and courageous mazoku live in prosperity after defeating the soushu with their power. Ah! We should never forget the entire world originated from the mazoku. Long live the great Shinou and his people..."

Is this the national anthem?

"...kingdom, welcome to the capital."

He said the name of the country when I was thinking. Conrad whispered to me that to abbreviate, it was Shin Makoku. That's the only thing I will remember.

My impression as I entered the capital is very easy to understand by saying "huge Huis Ten Bosch".^[1] I could say that the stores and houses, and the residents, from my eyes, it looks like a foreign country. However, I no longer have any doubts that this isn't a theme park. Such an enormous, elaborate theme park couldn't exist in Japan. Even if this wasn't Japan, and even if this is somewhere overseas, where would someone have a motive to go this far to deceive one individual?

Me, who until yesterday, I was an ordinary high school student.

Me, who was told that from today on, I am the Maoh.

The only answer that remains that isn't deceiving is that this is all a dream.

"Until I wake up, I can't do anything but keep associating with people here." You can't get off a boat until it's at the harbor, and a baseball game isn't over until the ninth inning, either. I can keep company with people here until I can see

the end mark.

"What are you saying? Your Majesty, well, let's go, Conrart and I will ride on both sides of you."

I see, I'll go, of course. Nine people in front, and accompanied by the remaining in the back, we progress down the main street in three lines. Citizens are on both sides of me, and they move out of the way and bow deeply to me.

"Ah, hello. Ah, umm. Ah, hi. Ah, you're so polite."

When I express my gratitude honestly one by one, the senior person in charge of education has a shocked face.

"Your Majesty... Please stop bowing your head to the citizens. Please have more dignity."

"What are you saying, the greeting is the basis of an interpersonal relationship. That's the same in any country in the world. It's a common rule to all nations."

This town looks prosperous compared to the towns we've passed through up to now.

At least, the places facing the main street.

As if I'd become an honor student, I looked down from the horse which was walking gracefully. It didn't seem like the same horse which had shaken off its master, and was feared by him as the black demon a while ago.

The spanker^[2] that was prepared for the king was born a rare jet black, black fur in Japan, called dark fur in this country. It was also heavier and stockier than the racing horses I've seen in a paddocks. It is said that it possessed all disposition required to be an army horse. Even if its heart stops, it'll carry its master and keep running. That's because it has two hearts. It's pretty nifty.

Because it's easy to remember, I named it "Ao". In the olden days in Japan it was common name for a horse like "Taro" for a human. That often comes out in historical plays. The color of each person's hair and skin was truly variegated and unreal. Like I've heard, there's certainly no one with black hair. Blond hair, brown hair, silver hair, white hair, red hair, chestnut, orange (I wonder if it's dyed), purple^[3] (I wonder if it's a trendy hair dye), green (probably chlorophyl)...

green?!"

"Hey hey hey hey heey, Günter!"

"Yes?"

"There is a green person there, spaace, space, space!"[4]

"Ah, they are a family of healers. Because their blood is a little peculiar, their skin becomes pale, and they possess the unique power to increase patient's healing. Humans seemed to persecute them two thousands years ago, so they seem to have flowed to this land. We owe the current longevity of our lives to them."

"Well, well then, what about that purple haired person? That girl awhile back was like that too."

"They're a lake side tribe. There are a lot of people born with strong magic, and they're involved in the training and security of the king's capital. As you have probably noticed, Your Majesty, I also have the blood of the lake side tribe."

Violet eyes, I see.

I sighed on top of the horse.

"A horse with two hearts, skeleton frames flying in the sky, natural green and purple hair. It's not possible to come across these things in Japan. It definitely can't get any further out. Like a girl with bunny ears, or a sexy black panther girl, or a birdman with three eyes."

I couldn't help but laugh at my bewilderment from my own imagination, as Conrad winked at the person in charge of education.

"There is an unbelievable amount of races in this country. Günter and I have lived long lives, but even the scholars can't confirm the amount of people. For example, if you limit the counting to person-like individuals there's about fifty million, but if you count the flying bone race and ground bone race, aquatic races and bird races, it's impossible to have an accurate number. Furthermore, if you include the souls who live quietly in the forest and mountain areas, that means the Mazoku live in the skies, the earth, the rivers, the woods and everywhere. Your Majesty, the souls who will follow your are scattered all over

this country."

A girl with golden eyes, who was obviously a member of one of those tribes, came scurrying over to the side of Ao, trying to hand me flowers. They were in a bouquet, and their multi-layered pale pink petals were slightly opened. After Günter received them and did a one round confirmation, he reluctantly presented them to me.

"These are ordinary decorative flowers. They aren't poisonous and they aren't thorny. That young girl probably wanted to pass it to Your Majesty more than to me."

"That's not true~. You seem way more popular than me~"

It's the very first time I've received flowers from a girl, so I was actually feeling pretty good about it.

Our troops marched forward without incident until we finally reached the true rampart. The gate made a heavy sound as it opened.

"...Uwah-"

At that exact moment I swear I could hear the theme music stream inside my head, and the narration of Naoto Ogata.[\[5\]](#) World heritage, ah, world heritage, world heritage. A poem of the wonderfulness of the castle.

The white stone paving of the road continued for a distance, with flowing waterways on both sides. The water branched off in two directions, going towards the town's eastern and western sides. When I looked ahead, I could see a castle often seen in European castle stories. It wasn't the German type of old castles but the large-scale type of country houses of Great Britain; a building with the left and right symmetrical. Being oversized in both width and height, I almost wondered if it was wide-screen. Rich green mountains protected the back, and the waterway started from a tunnel inside the hillside.

"...Umm, excuse me, I don't know what I should say anymore."

"Even if you don't say anything, here is the Maoh's castle, 'Blood Pledge Castle'."

Blood Pledge? There was a group in Japanese history who had the terrible

motto, "One person one kill!", but it's not a very peaceful name. Such a beautifully magnificent castle, maybe it's better not to hear the origin... Even though I don't want to hear it, the person in charge of education explains it.

"It is said that when Shinou selected this land, he promised to not let harm come to the spirit of the land. As a mark of gratitude and friendship, when someone other than the Maoh occupies this castle, the spirit of the land swore to make him atone for his crime with his blood. An oath of blood, in short, "Blood Pledge Castle", obeys only Your Majesty the King. It's impregnable, no, it's an absolutely flawless castle."

"So that doesn't mean that both the castle and the king stamped a seal with their blood, huh?"

Conrad seemed to be very happy, and pointed the central path with his chin. Soldiers were standing at attention in rows on both sides for a distance. When I pass by them they're sure to bow their heads, like a reverse-wave of a stadium. The last time I was in a situation like this was when in an attempt to take a short cut, I ran through the department store. As it had just opened, I was greeted by the store clerks' welcoming bows, who were standing in rows on both sides.

From somewhere I can hear a tune that sounds like a mix of Ravel[6] and Elgar. [7] Maybe it's the national anthem.

"Judging from this reception, Von Spitzweig's persuasion seems to have failed."

He seemed to bite his tongue at that person's name, who is he? More than that, why does everyone in this country have something like Von or Sir attached to them at the same time? Perhaps, Von is like the "Yama" of Japanese names, with Yamada-san and Yamamoto-san and Yamakawa-san, and is representative of numerous family names? Or... I guess I looked like I wanted to ask, and Conrad explained to me. More and more as I step into the garden, sure enough, I was welcomed to Hell.

"This country is divided into this area directly controlled by the Maoh, and territories of the ten nobles who obey the Maoh. Von is attached to their surnames. In Günter's case, he governs the Kleist region of the ten nobles so he is Lord von Kleist. 'Lord' is added to a name, because in an emergency they are the ones called to go to the battlefield. Basically the nobles are a military rank.

Men and women are the same. Those who are prepared to fight will be invited to do so when they're adults."

Huh, I just noticed that macho guy I met in the beginning seemed to have Von attached to his name.

"Lord Stoffel von Spitzweig is the former Maoh's older brother. He is a man who did as he pleased as the regent. The previous Maoh... She was the top Queen, but she declared her intention to resign and we moved immediately to summon your Majesty. But that guy tried to have her declaration of resignation withdrawn by any means. He will try to persuade your Majesty to try to protect his own position. However, he seems to have failed somehow."

Huh, Conrad's name was...

"Now he's celebrating the new king's triumphant entry into the castle, and he's probably contriving to take in your Majesty."

For the first time, an expression resembling hatred appeared on the good-natured Lord Weller. But it immediately vanished. In the short amount of time that I exchange the bouquet of flowers to my right hand. I don't know whether I'm controlling my own feelings or the words Günter added immediately after that are.

"I won't allow that man to do as he pleases anymore. I think Gwendal and Wolfram feel the same way about that."

"I hope so."

Did something happen? Although any idiot would notice, I thought so too as I rode on. My right hand holding the flowers got near the deceptively innocent Ao's ear.

"Umm, that man called Spitz or Spielberg or something..."

How many times did he get an Academy Award? I couldn't even say it was a joke. Suddenly, my horse is a black demon who lost her temper, because the trained V8 engine goes full throttle.

Even I, the rider, don't understand what she didn't like or why she started running wildly. Certainly, I only wouldn't be safe if I was shaken off. I desperately

clung to the horse running quickly down the straight course, while screaming with a "yay" and a shout that doesn't make it out, I was about to be the only person who reached the front of the castle strangely early.

The soldiers who were lined up to salute me would never think that the black hurricane that passed in front of them was their new king. From behind I could hear some advice.

"Your Majesty~, the reins, pull the reins-!"

"Conrart! As I thought, that horse still didn't have enough training."

Günter's words were brief, while he pursued me after kicking his horse's stomach.

"Don't cry just from this. She was, trained reliably, but even I, did not, train her, to have, a hover fly, go into, her ear. Your Maajeesty, pull the reiins, squeeze your thiighs!"

I run wildly through the the gift shops, interfering with things such as customers and shop assistants as they cover their heads, only thinking of going every which way. Ao easily jumped over several places, continuing to press on towards the entrance of the castle. Up to now soldiers were in a long row, but suddenly Ao intruded and ran beside the line in an obstructive place, and she ran through them. Down the center of the nice middle aged, dazed men.

She jumped over them again. During the short time in the air, I imagine the worst scenario.

I fall from the horse, and as my head drops I tell Conrad and Günter that the rest is up to them. What is the rest?! Why does my head drop?!

Just a little after the closed door of the main entrance, Ao suddenly reared up. I fell! And I hurriedly grabbed not only the reins but her jet black mane, and closed my eyes as I predicted the impact. But, the pain didn't come even after I waited five seconds.

"...Stay..."

And, the second I let my mind drift I fell. I'm sorry to say that this time under me is hard, cold and expensive marble. I learned the hard way that a passive

voice is important.

As I looked upward, I thought absent-mindedly.

Ao stamped a few times, then brought his face near me. She didn't seem to remember her fears as her clear eyes ask, "What are you doing, Boss?". Her lips are covered in bubbly drool.

By my shoulder is someone's foot. When I moved my gaze a little, there was a face in a high position. What a surprisingly tall person. But if I did call out to that man, he wouldn't lend a hand to help. Since I've come to this world, this is the first time I've met an obviously apathetic person. Am I really the Maoh, the master of this castle, is this really my own dream? Then, isn't it ok if I'm amused more?

"Your Majesty!"

I can hear Conrad and Günter's voices. And the sound of hooves striking the stone. The man seems to have realized something from the words of the two people. From way above me, a seemingly shocked monologue descends.

"...His Majesty... This is?"

What is "this", "this", faster than I could object the Love Theme from the Godfather was streaming through my head. I've already decided your theme song. Standing in front of me without lending his hand, as I expected, was a man I couldn't match in height no matter how many times I was reborn.

Not just height, but his face, too, I couldn't match his face.

His hair was as long as half his body, an undiluted gray that could even be called black, and only a portion was tied behind his back. He squinted with a deep blue eye, and he didn't seem happy about anything. Whether he seems sullen because the space between his eyebrows and eyes narrowed, or because he is sullen, is something I don't understand from my short life span. But his sullenness would have girls whining for sure.

While I've been called the Maoh, my face and outward appearance and position haven't caught up to high school students. At any rate, my appearance and intellect are getting there. I'm not muscular, and my voice isn't low. To make matters worse, when I played baseball I was a bench warmer for three years.

The man's interest was brightened, and he tilted his head to gaze at me. His melancholy was increasingly conspicuous.

"Your Majesty, are you hurt?!"

Conrad arrived before him, smoothly getting off the horse and meeting me halfway. Trying to pass him, a group of nice middle-aged men from that I bothered a bit ago run this way. Günter also jumped off his gray horse, shouting something. I couldn't believe that I was in the center of everyone.

"Is that the new Maoh?!"

His alto voice resounded in an offensive tone.

As for the super beautiful shape of the fourth person, even I might be able to match his physique physically. It can't be helped because characteristics like the length of the legs is a racial feature, like height and shoulder width and body weight. Since when did I become someone who only worries about body build. Maybe, because of that day when the second pitcher said, "You, since you're a small target, it'll be hard to throw a ball into you".

Even if our bodies are evenly matched, when I just glanced up, I've already been defeated. How can he be this beautiful! Because of them, his face emits an aura. Although it's likely to seem that way because of his dazzling blond hair. His looks and voice are like an older Vienna chorus boy. His white skin seems transparent, and his irises are an emerald green that make me think of the bottom of a lake, and furthermore he doesn't have a split chin. He an angel, definitely an angry angel. However, being in this place, he's also probably a beautiful Mazoku.

"Gwendal... No, big brother, is that guy planning on ushering in this human of unknown lineage as our king?!"

When he says "that guy", the super handsome boy, like in shoujo comics, glares sharply at Conrad. I heard the name Gwendal awhile ago, together with something like Wolfgang or Wolfram if I'm not mistaken. If the man with the Love Theme from the Godfather is Gwendal, then the older Vienna chorus boy is probably Wolfram?



"I can't put my confidence in such a filthy human! Judging from appearances he doesn't seem intelligent or dignified, and a man that would be lying around in the road in that area..."

"Wolfram!"

It wasn't Gwendal, the one he called brother, but Günter suppressed his words.

"What an awful thing! If his Majesty didn't have such a large heart, you would be losing your life about now."

A large heart, me? He seems to be thinking of someone else.

"Watch your mouth, I can't allow you to speak of his Majesty in such an awful way, even if you are the crown prince! Stop speaking so unfavorably of Conrart, even for an instant, he's your older brother."

Huh.

As I'm only listening, the character correlation diagram becomes jumbled up for me. The Godfather and older Vienna chorus boy are siblings; and he said Conrad is Wolfram's older brother.

Gwendal, Conrart, Wolfram.

Three Mazoku siblings.

"...Now way?! You, you don't look alike!"

"That is, inexcusable"

Conrad spoke with a smile as he walked to my side. He had an expression as if he was already used to these kind of things.

"Each of us have a different father. Well, not looking alike can't invalidate our blood relationship. Gwendal is my older brother, and Wolfram is my little brother. Perhaps they don't want to say something like that."

"You?" I asked inside my head.

Conrad, what do they think of you?

But sooner than I could ask the question, everyone's attention is turned back to me again. You are His Majesty, such are Günter's words.

"The new king, Your Majesty."

The nice middle aged men rush over. I've already gotten used to beautiful forms, so I don't mind these men's outwards appearances. Hnn, umm, oh, beautiful for their fifties, older men with dull blond hair and blue eyes. However, in their vicious military training they were taught to conceal the hidden door inside their eyes.

"I am the former queen's, Lady Cecille von Spitzweig's, older brother, Stoffel Von Spitzweig, who worked as a regent for the prosperity of this country. I sincerely welcome Your Majesty's safe arrival!"

"Umm, Lord von Spitzweig."

I spoke in a broken tone on purpose.

"Between me and your sister, who would you want to be Maoh?"

"Huh?!"

Stu~pid. If you can't respond right away, it just proves you only care about yourself.

"Hah, of course, Your Majesty the new king. The chance to choose the ruling family would be profitable for all the people of the nation. Your Majesty the new king is entirely our savior, who will create this country's future, and I hear the owner of a great soul."

"I think you're mistaken. I don't have such a great soul."

"Such modesty! That jet black hair and dark eyes! Your Majesty is certainly a Mazoku of high standing."

By the standards of this country, if you have dark hair and eyes, you're a handsome guy like them! Can I win? In short even though I'm only an average Japanese person, I have the authority of this country's seed?

That's a bit of a lie.

I only have the authority of a seed if I accomplish something.

"Where's the proof?!"

In a clearly hostile tone, he said exactly what he thought just now. The blonde

that looks like an angel; Wolfram.

"What proof do we have that he's the genuine article? Until I've confirmed that, I'm not going to recognize such a kid as the Maoh!"

"Kid?! Ah, no, that is, I might not be able to tell the age of a foreigner, but I can guess. But, but that? You look like you're about the same age as me, no matter how I look at you. If you look older than you are like most American high school kids, maybe you're even younger than me!"

"How old?"

Cocky, he folded his arms as the third son arrogantly asked me. It seems like this person decided it was necessary to ban honorific words.[\[8\]](#)

"...Fifteen... In two months I'll be 16..."

"Hmph."

"What's with this 'hmpf', hmpf. Then what age are you!? Such an irritating pretty boy, and you're already acting like an old man"

"I'm eighty-two."

"...Yes?"

Eighty-two? Even so he has clear skin, a full head of hair and youth.

"Yeah, right!"

You guys wants me to believe that you have more life experience than my grandfather?!

The bath of the second day was reserved for my personal use.

The stone floor of the bathroom was based on a cream color, in the Maoh's private bath the bathtub is officially seems wide enough to swim in, with water gushing out from five cow's mouths in the corner. At the edge of the first lane, while sank my body cosily, I thought of myself up to now.

What now, what will happen, Shibuya Yuuri?!

I was flushed down a toilet, spit out in a strange theme park like world, had stones thrown at me by the citizens, got called a demon, got called the Maoh, was told to kill humans, was made to ride on a horse until I about died, was greeted by everyone, brought to a castle with a scary name, was called "this is?", was told that he'd refuse to admit I was the Maoh, it was confessed that their real age was five times their appearance, and I had to go inside the castle with the scary name.

There were two-hundred and fifty-two rooms, three stories high and in one part five stories, the ceiling was impossibly high, and built tough enough that even Godzilla would have a hard time with it.

The stairs are so long you about lose your breath, there's about one-hundred and ninety people or more working in the castle, on the other side is a modest stable but an enormous barracks, with four-thousand five-hundred full-time soldiers. In another directions, Gwendal and Wolfram's personals soldiers are at a lodging right now, brought from their own territories.

For the time being I was guided to a room the size of a basketball court, a fire was in the fireplace and the floor was paved with fabric and fur. The stone wall was completely concealed by white coating, it looks like picture of Ueno my mother took when I was a grade school student. On the remaining three walls seemed to be tapestries of the national flag. Surprisingly, there's a decorative plant in the corner of the room.

"No television, no games, no minidiscs."

Before that, there's no electricity or gas, so there's also no telephone.

"...The bed... is super huge..."

The bed was, big. Even though a canopy wasn't attached, it was big enough for sure that even if a set of quintuplets became junior high school students, they could still rest together on it and be fine.

A beautiful bathhouse attendant wearing only a loincloth that barely covered his important parts offered to wash my back in the gorgeous gilded tub, which I clearly refused. Because I'm bothered by an inferiority complex.

I took a light pink liquid from a nearby bottle. It has a good aroma. Maybe this was shampoo. I roughly pour the splashing hot water from the bucket. There is no conditioner! Rather than manly, I'd say I'm acting like a sports guy.[9]

I firmly washed my body, because I was satisfied with the bath I took on the second day, I wondered at the time if I should take a long bath again.

"Huh."

From the opposite side of the place I entered, the shape of a woman only wearing a bath towel appeared. Not a girl, a woman. It can't be that this is, a mixed bath?! Wait, Günter definitely said that this was a private bath. Or is the said girl supposed to service me? There's not going to be that kind of service. No, because it's just been common people until now I didn't know, but perhaps she was a queen or minister or parliamentarian. But wait, wait-! Of all places in this huge pool she's in the second lane, where even if your body isn't stretched out in a line---!

She had golden curly hair down to her hips, a super sexy woman, whose chest was submerged only one meter from me. From steam, or from tension and excitement my eyes get misty, and I can't see clearly but she's surprisingly attractive. The measurements under her towel makes blood rush to my eyes and my cheeks and lips turn a lovely shade of pink.

But she's a "woman". She's not in the same generation as a "girl".

"Oh."

"Aaaaah, I, I, I, I didn't hear this was a mixed bath!"

"No~, it's fine. This bath is only for your Majesty, the Maoh. I only came in for a little bit out of habit. Don't mind me, new king, yo, ur, Ma, jes, ty."

"Uh, ah, that's a little bad, please don't come closer."

"Say, so you're the new king? How unexpected, to meet you in a place like this."

Now, my blood is rushing to my head and heart and the lower half of my body, and I couldn't make a calm decision. Danger danger danger! All the more because I've just reached puberty, it's ten times, or twenty times more

dangerous!

"Ah~ah umm, young lady, no, miss, isn't it a violation of the rules to suddenly enter the bathtub without rinsing?! And besides that, with a bath towel! Don't you know it isn't good manners to put a towel in the water in a public bath?!"

My voice was almost turned inside-out. It's not possible to say it like Monomonta.[\[10\]](#)

"Oh my, I'm sorry. It's because it's been a very long time since I've taken a bath with men."

She said that as she gazed at me while I was unable to move.

"Damn... Cu-cute."

At that time, with a cry and a scream and a shout that didn't make it out, I left and began to run.

What are you calling "cute", Miss Sexy!? And why are you, Miss Pheromones, in the king's bath!? And besides all that, who are you Miss Sexy Queen?!

I ran quickly in the form of only having a towel wrapped around my waist, and leapt into the place that I think I was told was my room, but once again there are young and cute girls there, and they raised their voices without seeming to make any words.

"What's the matter, Your Majesty!"

"What's wrong Your Majesty!"

When two people (the self-proclaimed Yuuri faction) came running in, the girl holding a lustrous black cloth trembled in the corner, and while she was made to avert her blank gaze from the new king crouching behind the gigantic bed, she murmured something lowly. My ass was exposed.

"Your Majesty, Your Majesty."

"...I like girls, I like girls but if you ask me if I'd like to be seen, I'd rather not be, I'm not really that big or huge."

When he sent the maid back from the room, Conrad came over to the bed. By that time I had finally regained my composure, stabilizing and prudently

wrapping the sheet around my waist again.

"Oh my, you put your behind away."

"Is there no privacy in this country?!"

"Your Majesty, as king you naturally have servants and maids. If you're surprised by each one..."

"Are they supposed to even be in my bath and my room?! Then what good does it do to hide this country's erotic books somewhere?! If I'm going to get picked up by beautiful naked women in the bathroom, where can I run away to and catch my breath?!"

"A nude woman in the bathroom? Oh..."

Conrad looked up to the sky as if to say, "My God!"

"...so she showed up."

"I thought this was some kind of service so I was just about to make a small request... Well, first of all, because I'm not that great of a man, I ran away."

"I'm glad, I appreciate Your Majesty's sense of reason."

"Oh, ooh, Your Maje'y, please try this on."

The person in charge of education said that as he held a black cloth in front of his nose for awhile. His eyes had become completely teary.

"What's wrong all the sudden, hay fever?"

"E, ejuse me, I'm in an entirely different standpoint than I usually am, and I'm having trouble looking at you... You are too praiseworthy and lovely at the same time... Ah, my apologies! I said something offensive, I should know better, I, I'm flustered!"

"What's wrong, Günter, this doesn't seem like you?"

"If it's hay fever you should rinse out your nose, wash your nose. It makes my older brother feel better."

In the beat I intended to take off my clothes, my finger touched Günter's arm. With incredible speed he drew back to the wall. His face was red as if he had a fever. When he held up the glossy black cloth higher, it seemed to be some sort

of underwear.

"They're underwear, but black, and glossy."

A thong. It can be tied on both sides. When I looked back at Conrad, he had his usual face.

"Why would a man wear a thong?!"

"Eh? It's the popular underwear for the time being."

"No way, then, that person and that person and that person are in a thong?! Even that guy making such a face was in a thong?! It can't be, you are too?!"

"Ah, no, I prefer something more natural."

"Bihyaah!"

When they simultaneously turned their heads, Günter was holding his nose towards the wall. Was he suffering from cedar pollen as I thought; if he sneezed I'd be certain. His eyes were also drooping heavily, how should I say this, like, he began speaking in a tone like he'd suddenly become an Italian man. Because of his incredible beauty from the start, if he was a girl I'd probably be reeled in by these.

"Please don't trouble me by talking like a stubborn old wife, Your Majesty. It's the same as if I knocked on the door to avoid seeing you take off your underwear...Che... Hah?! What did I just say?!"



Even though he seems to present an ambiance like a crimson rose, my joke was thrust back to me.

"P, please excuse me! I've had, in, in, insolent thoughts!"

"If you rinse out your nose with a normal saline solution, a normal sal...
Insolent, eh, what?"

"I'll go cool off my head!"

I shouted for him to rinse, not cool off, at his fleeing back, but he didn't seem to hear it. But for the time being the problem is the underwear I'm holding in my fingertips. Since I'm just a kid in the middle of break, I can only think it's a little embarrassing.

"But, well, even Japanese have a 'sumo wrestler's loincloth' traditionally."

"That's true, Your Majesty. Maybe it'll feel surprisingly good, and can meet a new you."

I don't want to meet a new me.

"At any rate, what in the world is wrong with Günter? Well, this is my next underwear. Huh."

As I'm passed clothes one after another that are very similar to my uniform, Conrad brings his face close to me.

"...Your Majesty, you smell good."

"Oh, it's probably the shampoo. There was some pink stuff in the bathroom."

Who put it there, I don't know.

For Shinou's dinner, it wasn't a convenient trick to introduce a program, nor a program where the former five-star pitcher of a professional baseball team oozes their knowledge of wine to the guests.

"Your Majesty, the king, will only be surrounded by close relatives at this noble and special dinner."

Somehow with his nose crammed with cotton, Günter is strangely guiding the tension while his chest is held high. With his hair neatly settled behind him, he's wearing an outfit that resembles priest garments, off-white white a long

beautiful gold thread embroidered down the front.

"Excuse me for being late."

Conrad returned after changing his clothes in a big hurry, and caught up with short, quick steps. As far as his appearance is concerned, I decided that he was the cosplay king! - this year.

His clothes were the pure white of a navy officer, an American woman's yearning. "Ai to Seishun no Tabidachi", originally called "An Officer and a Gentleman, starring Richard Gere. The theme music that everyone has heard is the BGM, refreshingly called an all-American number one hit. Without the hat.

"For the time being this is full dress."

The surface of the mountain stretched to the other side of the window, and I saw a light at the summit. The surrounding air was already dark, and the light was stronger than the twinkling stars.

"Please look closely, that is the holy ground of the Mazoku, the light of Shinou's shrine. That is where we all come from, the resting place of the great Shinou."

Putting aside the problem of a 'Mazoku, holy ground?', I looked at the wavering flame at the summit. Would it be like the temples in Japan? When seen through the eyes of a modern day Japanese person, Shibuya Yuuri, Shinou seemed to be like a god to these people. He probably has a grave there where he left from this world.

But, I was brought here because of an oracle or the words of Shinou.

"...I don't know whether or not I'm a king."

"Your Majesty, please look over here. This corridor is also an exhibition room, decorated with the gallant figures of all of the successive generations of kings. The portrait of your predecessor and yourself are incomplete."

Continuing to wander down the corridor, the paintings are so large that you can't even stretch both arms to each side, and there are twenty pieces. All the drawings are realistic with precise details so small if could make your eyes hurt.

"It reminds me of when I went to see the Barnes Collection at Ueno."

"They're lined up on this side in order of the newest. This is the 24th Maoh, His Majesty Von Radford Bertrand. He was called the 'Lion King' by the people and revered."

"The Lion King? I think there's a similar nickname somewhere in the world..."

"This is His Majesty the twenty-third, Jeannot von Karbelnikoff, called a strict ruler. And then His Majesty the twenty-second, Arsenio von Roberski, famous as a powerful military man. His Majesty the twenty-first, Dwayne von Gyllenhaal, the belligerent king, and before him that is His Majesty Davison Henstridge the slaughterer, and Basilio von Rochefort the brutal king..."

"What's with these names gradually becoming more terrible? Isn't there someone more peaceful, like the oil magnate king or the newspaper king or a brand king?"

"Well... because we don't have oil or newspapers or brands."

"The fifteenth Maoh, Her Majesty Grisela Trantinian Yaft, the head-cutter queen. Her Majesty Brittany von Wincott, the bloodshed queen..."

I've seen the national traits of the Mazoku. Some are sitting on a chair with their hands on a dog's head, and other are leaning against a sword that's been thrust into the ground. On a horse next to a pole with the severed head of his defeated enemies, this is definitely a painting of a Maoh. There were about three woman, and a king that could only be called a boy by his size.

But, even though they had different colored hair and eyes, and each one of them were on par with each other in beauty, as we go further back in time they seem to become more and more superhuman. Well, I guess because they basically aren't human. The clothes are much thicker fantasy colors than the present day Mazoku, and they're drawn with mantels and armor.

"They look like they're from an RPG of ancient times. Ah, of course, this is a world of swords and magic after all. Your modern military uniforms make that more than clear. Oh, this person-"

"He is the seventh Maoh, His Majesty Forgeas von Voltaire."

"He looks just like the guy with the Love Theme from the Godfather from a little bit ago!"

"God... You mean Gwendal? That's because this is his direct ancestor."

"Eh?! Then shouldn't that guy be the next Maoh? If his ancestor was the king, then one of his descendants should succeed him."

Günter, like a teacher, tilted his head thoughtfully and replied.

"Your Majesty, the position of the Maoh isn't inherited."

"But there's no elections? How difficult, what a pain."

"Oh, right. You've grown up in a different world for about fifteen years. Well, you'll learn little by little, there's still up to a year before you become Maoh."

"A year?! I'm supposed to stay here a year?!"

Conrad looked at me as I asked in return, and the tutor looked astonished.

"Your Majesty, you're the king of this country, you'll be spending the rest of your life here. Why would you question one year?"

This has become serious. The way things are going I'll have to repeat a class. Moreover, it's too early in May to decide to repeat the first year of high school. Now all I can do is accomplish this imposed goal quickly, and head for the goal in a beeline.

"And this is our founder, who united the Mazoku, who defeated the Creator and established Shin Makoku, the original king, His Majesty Lord Shinou. Glory be to his holy soul!"

"Huh, this one looks just like that kid. He must be one of his ancestors. Eh, his name was?"

"I can't speak his name without authority."

"You can't say his name, che, how stingy."

"Your Majesty!"

"But isn't it thanks to this guy that I was brought here and can't go back? At the word of this guy who should be dead, my soul flew here from a different world? And you can't even tell me his name, as I thought, stingy."

"I will tell you later, Your Majesty."

Conrad's voice was holding back laughter.

In the particularly large portrait, he was arranged at the front, a young man with blond hair standing with a naked sword in one hand. Just like Wolfram. But, his eyes are a bright blue like the clear surface of a lake, and somehow, somewhere something was different about him than the future generations of Mazoku. My amateur impression was, "He's proud, he's important, he feels like a natural king".

"...This person is?"

Only this picture wasn't one person. In a place a little bit behind, someone that was obviously a different race than the current kings was drawn. He has very ordinary, functional clothes, and he has no sword and no armor. Although his thin smile doesn't seem to say that he's a vassal or a retainer, either.

"He looks a little oriental, doesn't he?"

Günter was very proud as he explained about him. His respect and affection from the bottom of his heart is transmitted to me, when I don't know him either.

"The Great Mage has black hair and eyes, and he's the only person in this world who is of equal status to Shinou. If he wasn't there, we Mazoku would have been torn apart by the Creator, and we wouldn't have this land or this country but would have lived as wanderers. Before that, this world may have been destroyed"

"In a word, he's an amazing person?"

"Quite so. Moreover, he's more beautiful than anyone!"

"Huh?!"

Apparently, this group's aesthetic sense was unfathomable by Japanese. More than likely, the oriental with the calm expression was barely prepared. His intelligence seemed to win over his beauty.

"This gentleman and Your Majesty look very much alike. All the people will notice Your Majesty's absolutely noble nature and praise it!"

The cotton is about to shoot out of Lord von Kleist's nose. Ah, wait, he has a nosebleed, his nose is bleeding!

"Alike?! How?! Where to we look alike?!"

"Look, look Your Majesty, like your hair and eye color. Your Majesty resembles an amazing person, charisma, charisma!"

"But black eyes and black hair is dominant and Japanese culture!"

Other than that, he doesn't look like me or my family at all.

Curse you, Shinou. In my heart I curse at you.

Thanks to you, who should be dead, I'm quickly getting caught up in all of this. Besides that, once I have to repeat a year, I'll go to your mausoleum or whatever it is and ransack it a bit.

These cursed thoughts. Without realizing it everything is bounced back on me.

Günter seemed like he was in a drunken trance, as he recited romantic things.

"Shinou is the darkness, and the Great Mage is the light. They yearn for each other, love each other, and are born bearing each other's colors in body. In short, darkness is light, and light is darkness!"

"Shall I leave you alone, because it's getting long."

It seemed like he was used to hearing it.

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Chapter 4

Is this really a banquet?

As I stepped up to the round, opal table, I felt my limbs stiffen from the tension. "This looks more like a military discussion than a dinner party."

The eldest son and the third son were in the room, and both were wearing what seemed like their usual uniforms. Since Conrad is that way, it must mean that full dress for those brothers is being in uniform. Each uniform has the same design but different colors. Gwendal was viridian without a speck of dirt, and Wolfram was a deep navy blue. There are many varying colors for each post. It's easy to tell the difference between land, sea and air.

A man that seems to be a waiter carrying a tray bows his head to me very deeply. But the eldest son and the third son, as they have had what seem to be champagne glasses in their hands, won't even try to greet me. Of course, I wasn't able to bear the awkward atmosphere.

"Good, good evening."

Wolfram laughed through his nose. Being scorned by a person with a nice face makes it at least three times as offensive. Conrad enters while smiling, and places his left hand on Gwendal's back.

"Your Majesty, this is my older brother Lord Gwendal von Voltaire, and over here-"

When he reaches towards the glittering blond he's swatted away as if to say "Don't touch".

"...is my little brother, Lord Wolfram von Bielefeld. Both of them were called Your Highness until the other day; now they're Your Excellency. Of course, they're several positions lower than Your Majesty, so it doesn't matter if you just address them by their names as you wish."

"Don't touch me."

Gwendal is quiet, but the young one is hysterical and yelping noisily.

"Didn't I tell you not to touch me with your human fingers?! I've never even thought of you as my older brother once!"

"Right, right, I get it so I won't pour your drink for you. Because my white cloth is different than yours it'd leave a serious stain."

Looking as if he's really used to it, the second son leaves his brothers. The pretty boy and the idler.

"I explained to you that we have different fathers. You probably noticed that only I, Sir Weller Conrart, am not one of the ten nobles. My father was a traveller of unknown origins; he was a person with no value other than his sword."

Wolfram made an irritated face. Gwendal was indifferent.

"Then, you're a half? [1] Ah, why didn't you say something like half or double? [2] Your mother was a Mazoku, and your father was..."

"Human. With light brown hair and eyes, and penniless."

"And he was a great man."

All at the same time everyone's eyes turned towards the entrance. The Sexy Queen who had such an amazing body that it was almost a crime smiled. It's a tight black dress that made with a lusterless material, has a cut that might reach her navel, and a slit that makes her shapely legs completely visible. She doesn't have a single accessory, as if to say, "I'm the jewel".

She's letting out even more pheromones than when she was nude.

"Mother!"

"Mother?!"

After all, if any of the three called her that, that would make her the mother of three people. Is it ok for the mother of people who are almost one-hundred to only look about thirty?

"Thirty... About fifty... one-hundred and fifty... She's about one-hundred and fifty years old?"

That is, awhile ago I got excited about a woman who is about one-hundred and fifty years old. Her golden curls stretch out elegantly.

"It's been a long time, Conrart. It's only been awhile since I've seen you, but you're looking more and more like the handsome man your father was."

"Mother, you only grow more beautiful as well."

"Oh my, you probably say that to all the girls."

This is a conversation between a mother and son?



She hugs her sons one by one, but they barely look like mother and son except for Wolfram, and even if the eldest, Gwendal, is younger than her, she looks like a skilled older girlfriend spoiling a calm boyfriend. I secretly asked the second son.

"Is he a son brought in from the husband of a second marriage, or something like that?"

"No, I assure you, all three of us were born from that woman."

"Gwen, your forehead is wrinkling again. You won't be able to get the girls that way. Ah, Wolf! Wolf, let me get a good look at your face. Oh, you still look just like me. The men probably won't leave you alone!"

"...Mother, we just saw each other this morning. Besides, even if men liked me it wouldn't make me happy."

"Is that so? Are boys like that? I can't understand the feelings of young men these days. Aah, why couldn't I have had a girl? Boys are so rowdy and they distance themselves from their mothers so fast!"

"That's not true, I wouldn't distance myself from you, Mother!"

"Oh? Really?"

"Really!"

What a silly parent and child.

But, the queen's aim of attack is immediately directed towards me.

"Your Majesty."

"Hyah."

Her captivating body was pressed up against mine, an average body of a young fifteen year old high school student. Our faces were the same height, so close that we could have kissed. Her rose-colored lips shaped into a smile.

"We've met in the baths, didn't we, Your New Majesty?"

"That's, that's right."

"You've gotten so tense that you're stiff, you're really darling. I was thinking that it would be nice if someone like you would become the new king."

"I see." The reason I was becoming stiff is because the first 'big' of your 'big skinny big'[3] is hitting my chest.

"Ne, King Yuuri. You're King Yuuri, right?"

"I see," this isn't the place to respond like an audience member of Alta.[4]

"Do you have a lover?"

"Hyaaah~!"

While she's making strange sexy sounds, their mother is pulled off of me. With an expression that wasn't shy or angry, Günter forced his way through.

"Please don't fall in love with the new Maoh, previous Maoh!"

"No~, really, Gunter. You sound like a cynical widow!"

"I don't care even if you resent and abuse me. Anyhow, I, if the previous Maoh and new Maoh were to be lovers... No, excuse me, I want to avoid an improper relationship such as being lovers."

"Previous Maoh? Who? This... woman is?"

Not a Sexy Queen, but she was a real queen? The lovely Mazoku in the black dress (or witch) smiled and presented her white hand to me.

"Welcome to Shin Makoku, King Yuuri. I am your predecessor, Lady Cecilie von Spitzweig. Your Majesty was summoned because I said I would step down from the throne."

"Then, this is because of you, uh, no, eh, Lady von Spitzweig Ce... umm, Cecilia? No? Li, e?"

"Call me Cheri. Che, ri. My older brother told me to reconsider it, but I'm tired of a life where I can't love freely!"

Lady Cheri, because you have that sort of motive, I had to become the new Maoh even though I'm still a minor. As her slender fingers grasped me before my eyes, I sighed. Ah, the owner these delicate white fingers, if she could hold onto power for about one hundred more years, I could be sent off to live a normal life in Japan, and when my unfortunate wife died before me, half a year later on a spring day, when I was being watched by my only son and daughter-in-law and

cute grandchildren, then I could take a trip to the next world. Wait, what if this is the next world? If that's true, am I dead now...

"What's the matter, Your Majesty?"

My cheerful family planning rises and vanishes like a revolving lantern,[5] rises and vanishes.

What a story.

I've been invited as a guest to a certain country, my teeth chattering from the tension of being in front of a ruler and nobles, and I made a mistake in one instant and drank from what would normally be a bowl to wash your fingers. All the nobles surrounding me laughed scornfully and said, "Doesn't he have any manner", while elegantly dipping their fingers in the bowl. However, only the princess drinks the water out of the finger bowl with a cool face. It seems like she doesn't want to embarrass her guest.

Even if it's called "bowl" it's not a game of American football, so they should be hospitable! That's an anecdote of my mind that warms my heart.

If she drinks all of the water, I wonder if that means she's a kind princess.

I secretly sighed while watching water be poured into silverware nearby.

I want to stop. I feel like I can get along with Conrad, but the eldest son and the third son are hopeless. I'm not sure about Madame Cheri, but I probably shouldn't try to the point of her feigning ignorance about everything.

I arranged the tips of my fingers on both hands and prudently dipped them in the small bowl. And...

"Eh?!"

Everyone else was holding it with both hands and drank it all in one gulp! Damn, I didn't read the textbook of morality very seriously. Conrad has the waiter move back without drinking.

"You seem to know a lot about filth, cleaning yourself with sake."

Wolfram, sitting next to me, is maliciously straightforward. So that was sake. Then it's ok, I can't have alcohol anyway. Not to observe the law, but to preserve the height I want to be and a healthy heart, I won't smoke.

Günter is a bit away from the round table, giving instructions to the waiters. He isn't a close relative of the Maoh, so he doesn't get a seat at Shinou's dinner. Therefore, there are five people around the table. Sitting clockwise from the youngest.

The new king, myself, His Highness Wolfram, a former crown prince, His Highness Conrart, a former crown prince, His Highness Gwendal, a former crown prince, and the previous Maoh, Cecilie.

When I'm enclosed by Wolfram who hates me a lot, and the pheromone queen, I can't concentrate on eating dinner. I understand the feelings that Wolfram hates me well because until recently he was a prince and he was suddenly demoted. It wouldn't be so troublesome if they had safely stuck to the hereditary system.

Pouring a drink into a faceted glass like from Edo (probably sake again), the waiter lightly leans over and asks about something like an in-flight meal.

"Your Majesty, fish and meat... Bird, mammal, reptile or amphibian, which would you like?"

Which?! If I remember right in the old days of Yakult, [6] I think there was an athlete who may have eaten crocodile, but don't be surprised, this is what's called the difference in food culture. Even in Japan the viper is a popular dish. But it's really eel even though they say it's a viper.

"We, well, in that case, as a growing child, mammalian. No, wait, wait a minute. What kind of mammal is it tonight? It's not something like a fresh monkey or a newborn puppy is it?!"

A reflection of the image of the food market in China.

"It's cow." What a relief.

"The highest quality with eight stomachs and five horns."

"Five horns... Maybe something like gene manipulation, or... Uuh, well, the

cow."

Hochinosu, mino, ginoa, yan...[\[7\]](#) It's no good, I can't remember anything else about stomachs. A plate the color and smell of consomme soup and seems to be the appetizer is carried over. I took in hand what I had instead of a knife or fork. A dull, polished silver,

"...This brings back memories, a spork. Well, it is pretty rational. Totally rationally."

In elementary school, at lunch, this served two roles. For soup and hors d'oeuvre of the day.

"So, Your Majesty, what was the country you grew up in like? I wonder how it's different from our world."

The previous Maoh, Cecilie, grips my right hand tightly. At once the temperature of this male high school student who was formerly an unpopular jock goes up by 2 degrees.

"I, I don't know, there's nothing particularly odd, it's a boring world. Ah, but, this world is extremely different. We don't have people who can use magic, and we work more on improving scientifically..."

"Science! I've heard of that. It's a technology where people who don't have magic power or religious power can kill their enemies from far away, isn't it? The human countries seem to be doing that sort of research. It's terrible, the military capability to be able reach further than bows. If humans get that sort of war capability, I wonder if they'll abide by the agreement."

The third son said to his mother with cold eyes.

"I don't think they have those sort of ethics."

"Please don't say such scary things, Wolfram. If that happens, what are we going to do?"

"It's simple. We should stop suppressing our magic. When we fairly have equal war potential, we'll dispose of them because the humans will be too cocky."

"Wait wait wait, I didn't mean that kind of science! In short, well, umm, machines that will do troublesome chores like cleaning and laundry, and

machines that will plow fields all at once. In short, stuff to make daily living more comfortable."

Cheri seems sweetly surprised.

"I don't think cleaning and laundry are troublesome. That's the job of the cleaning men and laundry women."

I didn't even think about how the queen lives up to now.

"So, so, instead of people in charge of cleaning or laundry, you'd have a machine."

"If that's so, the servants lose their jobs?

"If that happens, those people work at factories to build vacuum cleaners and washing machines..."

I don't really know if people can live easily.

"Ne, well then Your Majesty, how about love? What is love like between different kinds of people? After all when there's obstacles and opposition, doesn't passion just flare up more?"

I can't figure out what she means by 'different kinds'. She's probably alluding to mazoku and humans, but how should I relate that to Japanese? International marriage? People already aspire to, not even mentioning that they're free to, or a human with a chimpanzee, which rarely happens.

"At any rate, you came from a very distant world. I'm glad you're succeeding the throne. Because of that I can finally leave the castle. It's been my dream for a long time to go on a free love trip."

She's dreamy, I grip my fingers and nod my head at this and that.

"That, that's great."

Great things are brought out to the dining table. The meat of the main dish. A red meat dish that I wouldn't say is favorably rare is in front of me. In front of the previous queen is almost a whole amphibian... No, it is whole. With that sort of face, how could you be eating frogs, Madam Sexy Queen.[\[8\]](#) I tried to recite a haiku.

"You must have been anxious about whether you could do it when you suddenly found out you're a king. I was too. That day a messenger suddenly came, and it was made clear that according to Shinou Genshi Your Majesty had the soul of the next Maoh. But, Your Majesty, don't think about it too much. For the difficult things everyone around you, my brother and my sons, will help you as much as they can."

"Mother!"

Sticking a knife in his bird, Wolfram speaks in a voice that seems aggravated.

"I don't plan on working for this man! I can't agree when it's not clear if he deserves to be the new king."

"Oh, then will you succeed the throne, Wolf?"

Next he scoops up something white that seems to be potatoes, and shakes his head as he puts it on his plate.

"Of course not. Big brother is far more suited to that position than I am. If it was big brother, he would show that those cowardly humans are fools."

Subsequently he picks up a glass for wine or something like a type of alcohol.

Next to him Conrad looks like he isn't listening as he takes a bite of fish. When the youngest child says "older brother", he seems to only mean the eldest brother of few words.

"Right, Gwendal?"

He knives the chicken meat again. He seems to have decided his eating order. The previous queen tilts her head sweetly.

"But Wolfram, don't you know the consequences when the king opposes Shinou's words."

It seems like he's a god-like being and when they don't follow his words, terrible things happen. Then, in the case that I refuse to be the Maoh, will terrible things happen to this country and all its people, or to me, the newcomer?

"Of course, that means Your Majesty, too."

"Eeeh?!"

Conrad answered as if he saw through me.

"What's with that~! I never asked or wanted to be king. Then that's almost coercion."

"...As I thought."

When his spoon should definitely go towards the potatoes as the next in sequential order, Wolfram gave a sideways glance to watch my involuntary reaction towards Gwendal's murmur. Because in that short phrase, there is the sound of contempt.

"From the beginning, you never intended to be the king."

Holding his wine glass too strongly, Gwendal continues without looking this way. His blue eyes seem frozen over; nothing like a timid Japanese person.

"He may have black eyes and hair, but that doesn't matter. Because this person won't become the Maoh. He wasn't prepared from the start. Isn't that right, visitor from another world?"

"Eh... well, yeah..."

I unintentionally reply positively, and Conrad's words interrupt.

"He's only been in this country two days. His Majesty is confused. Don't you think your speculation is ill-mannered, and a bit too arrogant, Lord von Voltaire?"

"But you can't escape the reality. Shouldn't you know that better than anyone? How many sacrifices are made when a king doesn't feel like carrying out his responsibilities? Your Majesty, take my word for it, if you aren't prepared to live as a king please return to your original world immediately."

The man with the most suitable appearance for the Maoh turns to me with an icy smile for the first time.

"As a representative of Mazoku, please go away before the expectations of the people rise."

"But I..."

I want to say that I wanted to go back but stop mid-sentence, because something inside of me seems to block my throat and my voice stopped. It seems like my willpower or pride or a show of courage or something like that is being troublesome.

I face the red beef as I pull myself together. The new Maoh bashing still continued over the table.

On the opposing team, Gwen and Wolf; Cheri was neutral, and Conrad seemed to be fighting alone.

"I especially want to confirm whether he truly has the soul of the Maoh. At any rate, the visitor should return immediately. It would be wise to search for a substitute."

"He is the genuine article, Gwen, the real thing."

"How can you say that so positively?"

Even though I was could only see a rare steak, I could see Conrad's smile. I feel like I can see it. Even when I can only see the back of his head, I can still see his smile.

"I wouldn't mistake the wrong person for Yuuri."

As soon as he finishes his last word, Wolfram flares up hysterically.

"What kind of proof is that?! Just saying you wouldn't be deceived isn't adequate! He probably dyed his hair, and his eyes... He could put on colored contacts or something like that, there are tons of makeshift methods."

"Unfortunately, I can't show you evidence that would make you consent."

"Then don't declare something like that! Mainly, if by chance this guy is the owner of the Maoh's soul, after all, wasn't he raised among humans with a low social status? I can't trust our country to someone like that. It would be a blemish on the great history of the Mazoku."

"Wolfram, this isn't about what position he was born into. It's about how he lives, and how he decides to behave. But if you're going to make such a fuss over it, I'll tell you. His Majesty's soul was entrusted to the Maoh of that world, and he chose a suitable man from his subordinates. So even though His Majesty's

father isn't from this world, he still has the blood of a Mazoku flowing through him."

"Ueeeh?! No way, my dad is a demon?!"

Not demon, but, Mazoku. When Japan had fallen into a great depression, bankers were called devils and demons. But, my father really was a Mazoku! How should I treat visitors in the future, as a son?

"What kind of face should I make when I see him, knowing my father is really a Mazoku."

"That should be fine, since when your father sees you, his son's really going to be the Maoh."

The second son is nonchalant. He has a point. That makes it harder.

"But Conrad, why do you know about my fath..."

"Even if his father is a Mazoku, isn't his mother still a human!"

It seemed like he wasn't going to stop attacking under any circumstances. Wolfram gulps down his glass, and because he's beautiful the way he glares this way is all the more fierce.

"You only have half the blood of a Mazoku flowing through your body. It's no wonder Conrart gets along with you, you're both "fake"! The other half of you is filthy human blood and meat, some person of doubtful origins, probably the blood of some girl with loose morals? That kind of person..."

Damnit, when I thought that it was already too late. I always regret what I do afterwards. It was because of this quick temper and flying into a rage that I stopped playing baseball after ten years. There are moments when my small-town sense of justice can't be suppressed. As a catcher, that's a fatal flaw. It's very disadvantageous in life.

Right in front of me I had slapped that beautiful face.



It was a good smack. The sound and angle were good. It was better than a one-base hit, but how much damage it did to my opponent was immeasurable. As proof, the other party stared this way, dumbfounded. He doesn't make a counterattack. The surroundings became so still you could hear a pin drop, and Wolfram's left cheek, where I hit, was dyed red. Not just his left cheek. His right, too, and his forehead, and the whites of his eyes...

Conrad knocks over his chair as he stands up. This time his complexion is changing.

"Your Majesty, take it back, please take it back immediat..."

"No!"

Cheri slowly puts her knife on the plate. Gunter plunges forward while running.

"I don't plan on taking it back or apologizing! This guy said something he shouldn't have said, he did something he shouldn't have done! I don't care if you make fun of me and insult me! But how can you say someone else' mother, someone you haven't even met, has loose morals?! What the hell do you mean by person of doubtful origins?! That some floozy and a man had a kid?! My mother is a human; no matter how I look at her, she's human. As far as your concerned the human blood flowing in me is dirty! What do you plan on doing? What do you mean by filthy human blood? If someone talked about your mother that way, what do you think you'd do as a son?! That's right, I'm not apologizing."

My temper was always like this, non-stop objections like the Bay Stars. I had the upper hand on Gunter, and continued.

"I definitely won't take it back! He has a pretty face so I slapped him instead of punching him."

"Are you saying you definitely won't cancel it?"

I nodded my head to confirm that, and Lady Cheri clapped her hands in front of her chest.

"How wonderful, the engagement[9] is complete."

Bulbs?[9]

Like the ones you plant to grow tulips?

"You see, Wolfram? Isn't it just like I said? The gentlemen can't leave someone as beautiful as you alone."

With her fingers entwined together she seems to be dancing for joy.

By gentlemen, she means... Me?!

"Because His Majesty is so cute I feel a little bit jealous. But it can't be helped, for the sake of my beloved son."

"Wait a minute, settle down, well, someone calm me down. Can someone tell me what's happening? What kind of manners have I violated this time, can someone explain it to me simply?!"

My favorite tutor hangs his head, heartbroken. As if to say, "Oh no..."

"...You didn't violate any kind of etiquette. On the contrary, it's not used by nobles recently, but by an ancient refined, and traditional manner, Your Majesty just proposed."

"By proposal, you can't mean..."

"You asked for his hand in marriage."

Marriage?! In Japan a boy can't ask get married to a girl without permission if he isn't eighteen. Before that, if the type of engagement wasn't a problem, Wolfram and I weren't the opposite sex of each other.

"Ma, ma, ma, marriage?! A man and a man?! And I proposed?! When did I do that?"

"If a noble strikes the other on the left cheek with the palm of his hand, it's a request for marriage. And if the one who was struck shows their right cheek, then they've accepted the request."

"Uwah, no way! B, but, we're both men, booth meen!"

"That isn't unusual."

Damn it all, I proposed to a man who insulted my mother?! The flower of love of the famous couple doesn't bloom as a tulip or hyacinth.[\[10\]](#) Or maybe it's not

a famous couple, but the birth of a royal couple?!"

Gunter is sobbing. I don't want to think about whether or not they're tears of joy.

"Your, Your Majesty, this sudden proposal is leaving me speechless... No, I should be delighted. With this, Your Majesty can settle down in this country as king..."

"Won't someone please say it's strange that we're both men~!"

"How can you allow something so humiliating!"

Finally, Wolfram seemed to regain himself and shouts at me. He didn't appear to be showing his right cheek.

"How can I do anything about it?! No one ever told me I had to make a fist when I punch people!"

"Shut up! This is the first time I've ever been humiliated like this!"

"Heeee, really? You've had a really blessed life then. When I was told to wash the junior's socks, or was designated the slowest one on the team, that was really embarrassing! If you've lived for eighty years and can't forgive one mistake by another person..."

Agitated by the marriage proposal, Wolfram swept his arm across the table. Dishes and glasses fell to the floor, and a silver knife fell by my foot.

"Uwah, he, hey, that's dangerous. That's reckless. Completely reckless."

"Your Majesty, don't pick up..."

I squatted down and picked up a knife slightly covered in chicken meat.

"You picked it up."

Huh?

I look around my surroundings as I'm squatting; Conrad and Gunter seem to have sorrowful expressions with their heads hanging, and the pretty boy who dropped it in the first place has an angry, sardonic grin.

"You picked it up. Good, noontime tomorrow. The weapons of your choice. If you haven't even been on a battlefield, you're a coward who can't even ride a

horse satisfactorily anyway. At least use good armor, and give me a good challenge."

"Wha, what?"

"Prepare to be torn to shreds."

After that he smiled maliciously and left after he apologized to his mother and older brother for leaving during the meal. The mostly useless tutor slumped his shoulders with a sigh.

"You propose and then immediately accept a duel. Your Majesty, I can't understand Your Majesty's mood swings."

"A duel? I was challenged? I was?!"

"Purposely dropping a knife is a silent challenge to a duel, and if you pick it up you are accepting the challenge."

"A duel?! Hey, then, suppose I get defeated, or, I probably will be defeated, but, will, will I die?! I casually pick up a knife to be nice, without even thinking about it, and that guy gets to shoot me to death?!"

With my poor imagination, a cloud of dust flutters around a Western desert as we take ten paces before we turn around and shoot each other, and I can't think of anything but the quick drawing gunman of spaghetti Westerns.[\[11\]](#)

The two people who are in "My Clique" try to comfort their new king, saying "It'll be all right", or "People rarely lose their lives in duels nowadays" or "You should come up with an eccentric weapon that Wolfram would never think of, to surprise him" or "Maybe if you wear a cute animal costume, it'll make him lose his fighting spirit". Gwendal and Madam Cheri watched them silently until they finished their drinks. Then they began talking.

"I knew he had no control over his emotions before... But I never expected him to be this impulsive."

"I know, I never thought he'd suddenly propose a duel."

When I calm down I instantly realize they're overlooking the marriage proposal. I am the so-called child who has returned from another world, who doesn't even know left from right. Surely I couldn't master the customs of

Mazoku, moreover of aristocrats.

"But, he's not entirely to blame."

"What do you mean?"

Gwen asked in return with a side glance.

I have a bad feeling about this. The mother was hiding something when it looked like she was suppressing a giggle.

"Well, uhuhu, it's because of the aroma of my perfume in Your Majesty's hair. I left it in the bathroom with the shampoo. Surely you didn't know the effect it had when you washed your hair."

"The effect?"

"I asked a apothecary to make it; it's something valuable that only works on Mazoku. If someone smells it and likes someone even a little bit, they'll become much more passionate."

"In short, it's something like an aphrodisiac or a love potion?"

"Oh my, what a crude way of putting it."

So if they favor someone they become more passionate. On the other hand, if they hate someone? Lowering his eyebrows slightly, Gwendal signaled a waiter to pour more sake.

"If one hated someone, they could become dangerous... It's no wonder Wolfram is in a frenzy. Mother, you should tell us those sort of things beforehand."

"Oh, why? Isn't Wolf's angry face the cutest? Is there a mother who doesn't want to see her son looking adorable?"

"...No."

"Oh, yes! How did Anissina's experiment with you go?"

"...I'm not ready to die yet..."

I listened dumbfounded as it sounded like a English radio broadcast.

Someone who hates someone else will become more dangerous. Someone

who likes someone else will become more passionate. I see, so that's why Gunter was tearing up a little while ago.

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Chapter 5

I'm about to cry.

I can't believe this. How could this happen? If you slap someone it's a marriage proposal, and if you pick up a knife it's a duel?! According to my common sense, it's either red roses for marriage or gloves for a duel. Just because I didn't know this country's customs, I'm standing at the crossroads of life and death.

"Aaaaaaaaaah!"

Even if I rolled around on the bed I wouldn't fall off because of how wide it was. So wide it almost made me feel lonely. Only now, at the age of fifteen, do I understand why girls keep stuffed animals with them.

"What am I going to do? How am I going to get out of this one?!"

I compose myself, trying to think over the pinch I was in. I try to think back to any other crisis I've gotten into that's worse than this... But I can't think of anything.

"There isn't anything! Nothing this cruddy has ever happened to me before! Things like duels aren't normal!"

Calm down, calm down, calm down, calm down. What'll I do if I'm beat up before I even face the enemy?

Awhile back Gunter was teaching me about it while suffering from a runny nose and watery eyes. The custom of winning by killing your opponent had died out hundreds of years ago. Duels these days were only a question of pride, and people rarely lost their lives.

Yes. Rarely.

Meaning that there were exceptions.

I thoughtlessly squeezed the pillow between my legs, and groaned loudly,

"What am I going to do?" As if in answer to my question, there was a knock on the door.

"Your Majesty."

"What?"

Conrad came in carrying various things.

"Great. Your Majesty hasn't gone to sleep yet. What are you holding between your legs?"

"Ah? Oh, this? It just made me feel calm. I don't think I can go to sleep."

"Is that so? I thought as much, so I brought these. Come on, Your Majesty. Practice, practice."

"Practice?"

He brought a leather 'tray' and 'pole'; when I grabbed the tray it turned out to be a buckler, and when he pulled out the 'pole' out of its scabbard it turned out to be a practice sword.

"Please hold the sword in your dominant hand. Yes, like that. This is a one-handed sword. And hold the buckler on your left-hand side. Try swinging it. How is that? Tell me if it's too heavy. I did my best to choose the shortest type of women's sword for you."

It was a little heavy for just one hand when I swung it. It was a simple weapon; a dull silver color. Holding the hilt reminded me of something very familiar.

"The grip is like a baseball bat. But the weight more like the ones the pros use, or a metal bat."

"Is that so? I hadn't noticed. It is like a bat."

It had already been a long time since I had played baseball. A long time since I'd felt the ball, or bat, or mask or mitt.

"The grip on this brings back fond memories. It'll be about a year now."

"Why did you quit?"

"Eh?"

"Baseball."

As he asked that question with folded arms, he also had a cheerful smile. I placed the sword on my lap and fell back on the bed, looking up.

How nostalgic. I wasn't mad anymore, but the memory was a little painful.

"...Awhile back I flipped out and hit the coach, so I was kicked out immediately,"

"And that's the reason you left the team? I wasn't asking why you quit the team. I was asking why you quit baseball."

"Why I quit... baseball. Even I can't explain that."

"Then maybe you haven't quit yet?"

"Huh?"

"I mean that you're not done yet."

Like Santa Claus or some sort of magician, Conrad held out a ball in the palm of his hand. The skin had turned yellow from being used a long time, with worn out red seams.

"A ball! Hey, what a breakthrough! The hardballs of this country look just like Japan's!"

"Shall we give it a go? To see if it feels the same throwing it."

The courtyard was surrounded by buildings in every direction and soft rays of light were pouring into it from all the windows. There's a moon in the sky, and a yellow semi-circle around a torch above the ground.

The only spectators were guards at strategic points. But.

"Looks like a nighter."

"Nighter? Oh, you mean a night game."

"This country has a word for a night game? Do people here play baseball at night?"

"They don't. There's very few people who play baseball... Only myself and some

children who are interested in it..."

Conrad passed me his own personal glove. Just as I had thought, it was a glove. Not a mitt. I muttered, "Oh well, can't do anything about that" as I adjusted my index finger on the outside, trying to grip the rough, tawny leather. The model was a bit old, but it was almost brand new and made for an infielder. I usually used the model type Zett, but this didn't seem like Mizuno or Descente. Of course this was a different world, so there shouldn't be any brand names that I know. But this familiar-looking boomerang mark is...

"No way... Nike..."

From about 10 meters away, Conrad was waving largely at me.

"Your Majesty, let's take it slow."

I held the glove up by my tilted head, and snapped the glove shut as I caught the hardball. Leather ramming into leather had a special feel to it. There was a shock to the middle of the hand, and an ache that slowly circulated down to the elbow.

"So this is hardball."

That's right. But it was emotional. Until now I'd been playing softball.

I grabbed the ball with my right hand, and it was unexpectedly smooth. When I looked closely there was a faded line that looked like something had been written there. Naturally, I couldn't read the Mazoku letters, but looked like he had childishly written his name on the ball. I pulled my arm back, and lightly tossed the ball back. Because it wasn't as far as I thought, it made a good sound when he caught it.

There was a big difference in temperature between day and night. Even though it was 'Spring' I could still see my breath. It was like a scene in the "Field of Dreams". After warming up, I figured out that Conrad was having fun and asked him,

"Should I try squatting a bit?"

"Squatting?"

"Yeah, umm, walk about half a dozen paces away. Good, that's fine. Now

throw it here."

"That's quite far, Your Majesty~."

"It's ok, I'm already in high school! Look, just throw a straight pitch, right down the center!"

I squatted down and focused on the soles of my feet. The ball came with intense force, but I caught it at knee level between my legs. The weight and speed were more than I expected because he had such bad form.

"Who taught you how to throw like that?"

I threw the ball back and was surprised by his bad form and even the position of his fingers.

"Your speed is good, but where, and who the hell taught you to throw totally wrong like that?"

"No one taught me. I watched baseball games on my own, and got a feel for it. I couldn't see how to hold or throw it very well watching from a distance."

"If you say there were games, then you had practice, too? Then there has to be a coach and students, too. Fine, you should hold the ball with three fingers along of the seam."

"I see... Hmm, can you really throw a ball well like this?"

"Isn't it obvious?! If you have a tight grip on the ball it'll be hard to let it go. When you mentioned games, where were they? I thought this country didn't have anything like a stadium? Do people go out Fridays nights for beer, and watch the Giants[1] play night games?"

"The Giants were a National League so I didn't know them very well... But, Your Majesty, there is no baseball in this country. The games I mentioned weren't in this country."

I stuck my glove under my armpit and held Conrad's hand, showing him how to hold it as I explained sloppily. 'Look, this is a four-seam ball, [MaruMA:Vol01:Translator's_Notes#C5N2 | [2]]], because the intersecting stitching can make it look like a rising fastball[3]. I'm not really listening to the circumstances of baseball in this world, because I'm more focused on teaching.

"Are you moving your body weight when you wind up? Otherwise your pivot foot won't be firm. This time keep your eye on the target. Don't look away from my mitt. And you take short strides. I can't show you how to do that, you just have to keep practicing until you find the best spot for you. Your follow-through is strangely large..."

Somehow I enjoyed explaining that. When I held his hand and shoulders and moved him around, it reminded me of my childhood and gave me a warm feeling inside.

"...I wonder if this is what it was like."

"What is?"

"I was just wondering if this is what it was like. When I was being taught I was about ten or so, and there was a one-day baseball class being taught by professional players. Back then I hated playing catcher, and I don't know if my father had a connection or won a lottery draw but we met up at the venue."

I wasn't especially big, nor mature. It was my father who decided what position I'd take when I was a grade-schooler, and I was scared of fast balls and runners. I had a mask, of course, but I was still scared when things were coming at my face. For a catcher[4] he was a slender professional player, and I admitted to him frankly.

For a catcher to face a trim professional player; I hung my head and told him frankly.

"If I said I was scared, I'd seem inept, right? But that man made me squat down, and he squat down behind me himself. After he positioned my mitt he called out to the pitcher."

The pitcher was over 180cm. He raised up his foot, with a ball inside his blue glove, and threw it through the air with his long fingers. If I think about it now, I'm sure that lob was a super slow pitch. But I stayed in place without moving or blinking, and the brand new ball flew into my mitt.

"And, my teacher asked me over my shoulder. Were you scared? But from now on I had already..."

"You've already caught a ball thrown by a pro player. Are you still scared of

playing on a junior team?"

As I looked at Conrad's hand, I remembered the breeze from that day. There still wasn't a roof.[\[5\]](#) The sunlight directly hit my cap.

"...I could never forget that feeling."

"So would you say you were touched by your coach's warmth?"

"No, not like that! Not at all! I decided to make him my role model on my own. Besides that one time I never got to talk to him, and I wasn't able to get his autograph!"

"But Your Majesty... you're a fan of the coach's team."

"Isn't that obvious?! For awhile I had the team's song on my cell-phone, I watched all the relays to the end, checked the FM station on the weekends, and was even in the fan club and went to the stadium. I've been saving news articles for four years, and collecting videos... What team are you a fan of? Does the team here have a name?"

Conrad crossed his arms with a meaningful expression.

"The Boston Red Sox."

"The Red Sox?! The big shots! Orellano, Wolcott, Clark, and Rhodes from Kintetsu!"[\[6\]](#)

"Who? I don't know him."

"From The Pacific League... On my world, he's a former player for the Red Sox. I guess it's possible the teams on this world would even have the same names. The Tigers and Giants have teams in Japan and America. Which is completely chaotic, with a pair of the Cubs and a set of the Giants, even though they're entirely different nationalities..."

"That's because the Giants are a National League, isn't it?"

"Can they have the same name in the League? Besides that, Boston is the name of a place on Earth... That shouldn't be here..."

When I think about it, this man is unusual. We have too much in common. Gripping the ball, I took a long, hard look at Conrad's face. I unconsciously grip

the ball dangerously tight, until my index finger started to cramp.

"Gunter didn't understand any of this stuff, but you seem to know all about it. Like merry-go-rounds, and my father... And to top it off, the Red Sox.... What's the meaning of this? Just awhile ago you said this country didn't have baseball. Then, where is this? Which humans in what country like baseball? Where are the Boston Red Sox?"

It's just not...

"Where else are they besides Massachusetts, in America, on Earth?!"

It's just not possible.

Conrad spread both his arms with the glove still on, and shook his head 'No'.

"Nowhere. They aren't anywhere besides Massachusetts, in America, on Earth."

"Then how do you know about them?"

"Been there."

"When you say "been there", who went where?"

"I've been to Boston."

To Boston?

"Not just Boston. I've been to different places. Washington, Staten Island, New Hampshire, Orlando, Quebec, Edinburgh, Wales, Dusseldorf, Cherbourg... While I was protecting Your Majesty's soul I saw the world you grew up in."

It's a chapter from Lonely Planet, [7] for a visitor to Earth.

"Seventeen years ago, in your previous life, your soul became pure white because you healed wounds. While protecting you, I visited your birthplace, the United States of America. That's how I came to love baseball, and I came back after I made sure the soul of our future Maoh was safely born. Your Majesty's mother was a strong woman. Even when she was about to give birth, she told off the taxi driver."

"It can't be... You're the man who gave me my name?!"

"I didn't think she would actually use it..."

Then my being teased for the passed fifteen years as "Shibuya Yuuri Harajuku Furi" is 20% his fault? The rest of it was because of the kanji characters my parents picked out.



"If that's true, then you first met me when I was still in my mother's stomach?"

"That's correct."

Is it ok for such a strange story to exist? It seems like he hasn't changed much from fifteen years ago when he met my mother. The man who named me was smiling right in front of me. And he keeps calling me "Your Majesty".

"I've been waiting for fifteen years..."

He took off his glove and held it under his armpit, wrapping his hand over mine on the ball.

"For the day I could meet Your Majesty in person."

The conversation in the left half of my brain wanted to tell him "Thanks" or "Thank you, on my mother's behalf", or some other standard answer. But when he was facing me with such a human expression, the right side of my brain won no matter how much I fought it, and I already forgot all those other phrases.

"...Don't call me "Your Majesty". You're the one who named me."

"Yuuri."

That's right, because you gave me my name! Even so, to hide my embarrassment I had to keep speaking in a higher voice than usual. I felt a little touched, because it was unlike me to be so emotional.

"Besides, don't talk like we're brothers who have been separated their whole lives! We basically just met yesterday, I've only heard about you before from that one cab ride. Well, if you had written your name on your luggage or something back then my mother probably would have remembered that, too. But look."

I held out the ball.

"It looks like the owner wrote their name on their baseball stuff."

"...That's not my name."

What?

"I was just trying to take home a glove that I had bought for myself, when I got the ball at the stadium. I didn't ask for anything, but a young man on the visiting team asked if I wanted him to sign it and took it suddenly..."

"Wh,wh,wh,wh,wh, what?! You have a great ball signed by a Major Leaguer and you're using it to play catch with me?! Who?! Who signed it?!"

The text was so faded that even if I knew the English I wouldn't have been able to make it out. What am I going to do if it's one of the gods of Major League baseball?

"What do you mean? Who's more famous than Your Majesty?"

"Are, are, are you serious?! I was an alternate for three years so I couldn't even think about going to Koshien, well, nevermind Koshien, even professionals can't compare to the major leagues... And, baseball has barely even spread around this world yet!"

"I wouldn't say 'has barely even'. It's just me and a few kids."

"What you mean is, right now I'm far beyond the top player? Is that the correct starting line-up for the game? I'm the "Ichiro" of Shin Makoku? But I play catcher so I should say I'd be the successor of Itoh?"

"Even better. In Your Majesty's case, you would certainly be a player, as well as the coach, the manager, the referee, and the owner. If it's a team managed by the government, the king would own it of course."

"The king?! The king, huh? Maybe it would be ok to be the Maoh."

Conrad looked directly at me, and his amber eyes narrowed as he said,

"I'm glad, Your Majesty. I'm glad you feel better; if only a little."

I'm not feeling better, Conrad. But I couldn't think of anything to say.

"Yeah, but if I'm king, doesn't that mean I can make baseball the national sport? We could build a Shibuya Yuuri Commemoration Stadium or have the first Shibuya Tournament!"

Something crossed my mind.

Chapter 6

It was a bird that flew across.

There was no pollution in the morning air as I yawned as large as I could. When I opened the window to breathe in the fresh air, there were sapphire birds with long orange tail feathers, flying right by the balcony. They were beautiful, but squawked, "Engiwaru!"[\[1\]](#) in a horrid voice.

For breakfast it seemed everyone ate on their own. I packed away the bread and cheese that was brought to my room without much thought. Meals were the only time jocks would take quantity over quality. Rather than the top class malt bread,[\[2\]](#) they'd go for the all-you-can-eat one-hundred yen sweet bread. So the rare steak I had last night didn't really help fuel me.

After I ate enough for three people, Gunter looked like he was pale and worn-out. His hair and clothes were proper, but he had bloodshot eyes with dark circles under them. While pouring milk in a fourth cup of black tea, I raised my right hand in greeting.

"Good morning, Your Majesty. Most importantly, you seem to be in high spirits."

"You don't seem very well. You look like you didn't get enough sleep."

"Yes. I was thinking over today's... duel until sunrise. However, I wasn't able to come up with a good idea..."

"I thought about it for awhile, too."

After I thought over it as hard as I could, there was nothing better than the strategy I finally came up with. If I'm still defeated, then there's no way I could win; you could say it's my ultimate weapon.

"Is Conrad up? I want to borrow something."

"He got up early this morning to go out of town for supplies. He should be back about noon. But what do you plan on doing, Your Majesty? Wolfram is more slender than his older brothers, but he is good with a sword. He inherited fire magic from mother's side of the family, and he's this country's most prominent fire magic user. If you challenge him carelessly..."

Gunter sounded more sorrowful than the actual person involved as he choked on his words.

"You say that so seriously. But yesterday you told me people rarely die."

"I said that, I certainly said that but..."

"I don't plan on using swords or magic. I can't win with them. It's tactics, tactics."

"Then what sort of weaponry will you use..."

Just that instant the sun came directly overhead, and a horn signaled that it was noon. I took this opportunity to fiddle with the dial on my G-shock to match it to the time. After I played with it for a while Gunter hurried me out of the room. I had borrowed what I needed from Conrad, who had returned from town.

When we went out to the courtyard the number of guards had been reduced to a minimum, and the windows facing the centered were closed to keep it a private match. Madam Cheri waved at me with a smile from a VIP seat on the balcony. Gwendal was leaning against the wall with his arms folded and my opponent, Wolfram, reclined smugly on a chair.

He's a thin-skinned guy, so he must be irritated that his opponent hadn't shown up. My first strategy was to make him lose concentration from being irritated. You could call it the "We've been waiting for you, Musashi"[\[3\]](#) strategy. It was pretty cheap.

"I've been imagining you begging for forgiveness while I pound you into the ground. I entertained myself thinking of that while I was waiting."

He wasn't very irritated. Operation Miyamoto Musashi was a grand failure.

"You think you can just decide that I'd lose? Maybe my grappling skills will finally wake up after fifteen years."

How is getting irritated going to help? Calm down, calm down.

I drew a circle in wax around the stone pavement, and I started preparing. Wolfram's expression changed.

"Why are you taking off your clothes?!"

"What are you talking about? You have to strip, too."

"Me?!"

"That's right. Because the uniform sumo wrestlers wear is their bare skin."

I had borrowed some new underwear from Conrad for that.

The common people wear trunks, while the rich people or nobles generally wear panties with ties on the side. As a gung-ho noble, Wolfram would almost positively be wearing the panties. I don't want to see him in his underwear, but he has a figure that looks like it'd come off easily during the match. If that happens then the match is mine. You're immediately defeated if it falls off. There is a rule for that.

"Sumo wrestling is a super heavy-weight sport, where man versus man in loin clothes, each trying to knock their opponent down. If they take a step outside of the arena, or anything other than the bottom of their feet touch the ground then they lose. It's a traditional and honorable sport!"

"Loin clothes? Arena?"

In my group, Gunter looked bewildered. Only Conrad understood, "Ah, Japanese sumo wrestling?". It's likely he knows a little from America.

"Come on, hurry and strip."

"Man versus man, trying to knock each other down almost na, na, naked?!"

"Right. With bouncing bodies, and sweat scattering."

"Stop screwing around! You expect to challenge me to such a savage and lewd match?!"

"Lewd?! How can you say something so rude about Japan's national sport? It's much better than killing someone."

Madam Cheri waved largely at me from the balcony.

"I love this game~!"

She threw a passionate kiss.

"...I guess it can't be helped, then, you can keep your clothes on. Hurry and get in the circle."

Did Wolfram think this was the same as the standard boxing ring? He came in looking all important like a procession of sumo wrestlers. Except it would be like only the grand champion was announced, and I tossed my jacket out of the ring. "I explained it the best I could, although you probably don't get it... Well, that horn awhile ago was the signal to begin, wasn't it? Ok, we just have one shot, like on Gachinko, [4] Sir... Wolfram."

I was completely hesitant. I can't just call him by his last name.

Hastily, directions are sent to the watchtower and a loud "Begin" is announced.

From the start I take a low position, and with a quick forward movement I struck Wolfram's waist while he was unprepared for a lunge. Instead of a loin cloth I took hold of his belt. It was an instant victory. There wasn't even a battle.

"Uryah!"

"...Che."

Although I didn't plan on taking out his legs, my opponent tumbled over facing up.

"...Huh?"

Not understanding what just happened, the pretty boy tumbled back stupidly with his mouth half open, staring up at the sky above. Just yesterday that's how I felt. How pitiful. Completely forgetting his hatred and hostility while in his daze, Wolfram looked more like an angel deceived by a demon than a noble of a Mazoku family. But nothing would get solved while I was sympathizing. I slowly started to feel excited. Could it really be true that I won? According to the sumo wrestling rules, nothing but the soles of the feet are supposed to touch the ground... To say nothing of his entire body touching the ground.

"That's it! So I won?! I won!"

If I asked a sumo referee fan, "You win!"

"I won I won I won I won! Yay!"

"Your Majesty! It was a splendid battle."

Gunter was already moved to tears and, losing his composure, he clung onto me.

"I told you I had a winning strategy! You just have to use your head, and think smart!"

"This duel that was born out of Your Majesty's profound benevolence, without a drop of blood shed on either side, will be a moving tale for ages to come among the Mazoku."

"People will talk about it more because it's a funny story than a moving tale."

"I hope this settles everything."

The only person who seemed calm was Conrad, who murmured something while offering a hand to his fallen brother. In a flash his white skin flushed red, and the loser of the match swiped away his brother's hand.

"What kind of idiotic victory is that!"

"Wolfram."

"How can victory be decided with a game from another world!"

I feel stupid that I ever felt sorry for him. He really didn't learn his lesson. The humiliation fueled his anger, and seemed to burn up the fact that he'd been defeated.

"Listen, you! You plan on becoming this country's king?! Then win using this country's methods! If you're the Maoh, you should have a Mazoku duel!"

"Wait a minute. You said before that I could use whatever method I liked. You're just mad because you lost. Don't be such a poor loser. That's not very manly, is it?"

"Shut up! Someone, bring my sword."

A soldier ran up. In a flurry I retorted in a high voice.

"Hey hey hey, wait, wait a minute! Seriously, wait. If we use real swords won't we die?! Don't start taking this seriously after you lost!"

"Then you weren't serious in that crappy match we just had?"

"Don't call it crappy!"

Bit by bit it started to sound like the stand-up comedy act of a married couple. Gunter tried to mediate.

"Wolfram, isn't this a condition of your own suggestion? I can't ignore such selfish demands."

"Then what are you going to do? Are you going to fight in his stead? Is the man who calls himself the new Maoh going to use his subordinate to fight a one-on-one match?"

While I was thinking how this bastard had a comeback for everything, the logical part of my brain was having a strange premonition that I didn't have before. I have no idea where such wisdom was coming from; the right or left side of my brain. Without even noticing... the way I was looking at my surroundings had gradually changed; my senses weren't clear. Without taking my eyes off my opponent, I asked Conrad next to me.

"If I become the Maoh, ah, by some chance, I mean. By chance. If that happens, will that guy be my ally?"

"Of course."

Conrad nodded deeply. He wasn't just saying it because he was his little brother.

"And what kind of person is he? Would he betray me because he hated or resented me?"

"No."

"Then, for larger causes, he's the type who would even cooperate with someone he hated?"

"If we're talking about Wolfram, then no matter how much he hated someone, I think he would compromise for the sake of Mazoku in the end. He has pride as a Mazoku. And he wants to keep Mazoku at the top of this world. So even if it

was someone he hated, if he believed in the cause, he would probably follow them."

"I see."

"And may I add one more thing? About Gwen. He loves this country more than anyone. He's more serious than I am. But he has nothing but love and devotion towards Mazoku and Shin Makoku."

He seems to be suppressing a throbbing wound.

"...That's the problem."

If I'm to believe what he said, Wolfram is an ally. Even if we're on opposing sides in this match, somehow we'll be on the same team. My calculations and emotions were in union.

"I get it. Give me a practice sword. If I have to do this to make him feel better, then I have no choice but to settle this quickly."

The only way to fix his wounded pride was to fight with real swords.

"Honestly, I'm an amateur with swords so I can't win. But even if I lose this time, it'll still be a draw. I didn't have good odds to begin with, so even if we draw I still did good, didn't I?"

If we can call a truce with a draw, there shouldn't be any quarrels in my team.

"I thought this would happen."

Conrad took a sword and buckler he had set against the wall, and after he handed them over to me he called for Gunter. At that time the elder replaced the weapons on the other side with ones used for practice, with some wise words.

"Your Majesty, don't worry. You can see it's incredibly strong because of its large size, but there isn't a blade. If it hits you in the head it'll crush it a bit, but it can't pierce your heart."

"But if my skull caves in I think I'll be on my way to Heaven..."

Conrad unfastened two of his buttons and pulled out a strap hanging around his neck.

It was about the size of a 500 yen coin, with a silver border around a circular gem "Your Majesty, take this."

It was a dark blue; darker than the sky.

"It's Lions blue."

"My... friend gave it to me. I hear it's a charm for protection, but this morning I was searching around town. This is a demon gem, so it shouldn't work for anyone but someone who has Maryoku. Whether it's fortune or defense or offence, it should be useful for something."

"You're giving it to me?"

"Yes."

The tutor cleared his throat forcefully and interrupted.

"Be careful when you accept things. The act of receiving a gift is to accept that person's loyalty, even if Your Majesty doesn't want it. I don't mind for myself and Conrart, but you shouldn't try to increase the number of your loyal servants without knowing it."

"So you're saying not to accept things carelessly? What's with that? It sounds like elections."

The stone part of it was a little warm when I put it on my chest. Rather than something miraculous, it's more like when the toilet seat is still warm from the previous person who sat on it. I stood up on the hard, gray earth, with the sword in my right hand and buckler in my left that I'd held for the first time last night.

Wolfram didn't have a buckler, but was hoisting his sword with both hands, aiming for me like Ichiro^[5] in the batter's box.

"I wonder if that's really a practice sword..."

It was more like a giant◆◆frozen swordfish^[6] than a sword. That or a frozen salted-salmon. Swinging around that sort of thing alone would knock a ball out of the stadium. I feel like I'm chickening out before we've even started.

"I, I planned on giving up as soon as possible, but if I can't talk after taking a hit from that, please throw in the towel quickly."

"Give up? The towel?"

Conrad answered suddenly like an American.

"Ok, Yuuri."

"Are you ready, foreigner!"

They sent me there without my permission, and now they're calling me a 'foreigner'?

"My name is Shibuya Yuuri. If you want you can use 'Lord', I don't mind."

"Don't screw with me!"

The match suddenly started. Wolfram came at me with a huge swing, aiming to strike me down with that salted salmon. In an instant I move myself under it and hold up the buckler overhead at the center of my body in order to reflect it. The impact felt like it had been hit by a metal ball, and the pounding passed through my whole body. The outfielders are shouting at me frantically.

"Your Majesty, avoid it, avoid it! It'll be dangerous if you receive a direct hit!"

"Stop giving me so much advice, Gunter. If I wasn't used to it my arm would have been broken in one hit. It may be instinct, but Your Majesty's judgement is correct."

It wasn't rational judgement, just years of habit. Anyway, I was told even if you have to take a direct blow, or jump on top of it, absolutely never let the ball pass. In short, it was my job to get the ball.

Even before I sent it back, another swing came. And again, straight from above. It's impossible for the buckler to absorb all of it. My left arm and elbow and shoulder are getting numb. Continuing on the right side, from above again.

"What's wrong? What are you holding a sword for?! You're just leaving your right hand hanging uselessly! Or are you frozen with fear?"

"Shut up."

Calm down, don't rush, Shibuya Yuuri.

In front of me a massive iron weapon was coming. It was glistening in the afternoon sun, with silver lines etched across it. Stay calm, my arm hurts, keep

my balance, bring down my center of gravity, I can't blink, there's no time, tilt forward, switch to offense when there's a chance, if you say kendo it's about the face, face, body, sweat is getting in my eyes, face, face, body, soaked.

I'm not chicken. But, when something is coming at your face it's scary. When they're holding it up, and you already... You've already caught a ball thrown by a pro player. Are you still scared of playing on a junior team?

The breeze from that day.

There's no ceiling above.

I'm not scared anymore.

"Your speed isn't that scary."

"What did you say?!"

Resolutely, I tossed aside my raised buckler, and my opponent pulled down his stance. With that chance I grabbed the hilt of my sword with both hands, putting it in front of me to protect myself.

"Ah, he threw away his buckler. Ah, I can't look, Conrart. Hurry and throw in the toaru,[7] or bedpan!"

"Not yet. Your Majesty is reading Wolfram's rhythm. The foundation of his attack is exemplary, but is always predictable. Look, he just barely stops with his sword. Besides, I didn't bring a towel."

"Right."

I can read where he's aiming at next since Conrad pointed it out. But it didn't have anything to do with his foundation or being exemplary. Rather it was understanding my opponent's personality.

His meal sequence has been decided. There's never any change in it. It's the same rhythm as before. You can read pitches that never change before long, and the pitcher will get eaten, This is the same.

The metal crashed against each other in front of my face. Even though sparks were flying I clenched my teeth. My small finger on the end of the grip became numb from the light vibrations.

"...If I was your coach, you wouldn't be a starting member because your timing is always the same! Such a dull pitcher is..."

If you get attacked from the side it would take longer to compose oneself than if you got hit from the front. I jerked my right leg and shoulder at the same time, and brought down my sword forty-five degrees for a square position.

The take back, my opponent synchronized, and I stepped forward with my left leg. I put more strength into my thumb as his bat, I mean, blade hit my blade. I never drew back my hips, but I didn't rush to tilt forward either; my body's axis is fixed in place.

"...Damnit!"

A swing through!

It was the high-pitched clang of metal bats that I was used to hearing. The base of my arms hurt intensely. The impact gradually became a shiver, and spread through my ribs and hips like Morse code.

Wolfram's giant weapon flies through the air, sticking in the ground with an echoing murmur.

"...Hyahou~."

It feels like a homerun has been hit, with bases loaded, to turn the game around, but from a distance it was a second fly ball. Either way, my opponent was unarmed now, and I awkwardly try to find a compromise for a ceasefire.

"...I'm worn out already, so if it's ok with you, maybe we could call it a draw for today... Uwah!"

I jumped back in shock. Pale-faced, Wolfram had something the shape of a basketball in his right hand, with only his middle finger out a bit, and orange fire ball rested on it.

"Wolfram!"

Gunter cried out.

"His Majesty hasn't been taught Majutsu yet! Don't start using fire magic because you were defeated!"

"I'm not defeated!"

"Th, that's why I said we could call it a draw."

"It's not a draw, either. We're continuing until one of us can't fight."

His beautiful face was twisted with anger, and the Mazoku prince thrust out his right hand.

Gunter shouted some sort of incantation, but there was only a small explosion high in the sky. For a normal person like me I couldn't imagine the process, but it was probably a clash back and forth.

"Gwendal! Why are you intruding?! If we don't stop Wolf, His Majesty will..."

"You're the one who is intruding. This is a chance to see if we made an error. If he's truly the Maoh, he shouldn't be able to be defeated by someone like Wolfram."

"But His Majesty hasn't made a pledge with an element yet..."

"Magical power is..."

Gwendal separates himself from the wall, turning around, as he interrupted Gunter. As usual he had a sullen, beautiful face.

"Magical power is the nature of one's soul. It's not something that can be obtained by learning or wanting it. If that is the true Maoh, even if he hasn't undertaken the oath or teachings, shouldn't all the elements want to follow him? They would kneel before such a noble soul."

I wasn't in a position to be listening to the conversation of the outfields. I should be the true Maoh, I mean, even if there's some slight possibility that I am, my confidence that I could win a match of flaming dodgeball was...

"Everything made of flames, obey the Mazoku who slaughters the creator!"

I wonder if I'll be able to use that phrase if I remember it in the future. I don't have time for that right now. I started running. Run away, get away! Surely there'd be a chance for a counterattack, so for now I need to get somewhere where the fire balls won't get me, I need to run as far as possible even if that means just one more step!

"Read my will and obey!"

I accidentally plunged forward and fell down. But the fireball that had gotten even bigger grazed over my head and hit the wall. The unique and horrible odor of burnt hair irritated my sense of smell.

I'm going to be killed. If one of those things hit me I'm going to die!

Why? Why me? I decided to go along with them until the END mark, so why must he surprisingly attack me with unscientific balls of flame?!

Conrad pulled out his sword, and Gwendal pointed the silver tip of his sword at him.

"Gwen, undo the barrier. If you don't, I'll stop Wolfram even if it means cutting you down."

"Cutting me down? I wonder how true that is, Conrart."

"It's entirely true."

Wolfram seemed to be entirely serious, too. This time it wasn't a ball of flame. With a small bend of his middle finger, the air began to tremble. The tips of his fingers became red like blood, and that colored swelled and suddenly became a beast the size of a wolf. But it was still fire.

"What is that?"

With a cruel smile Wolfram let loose the ferocious beast.

What is this? If I can't win with sumo wrestling or swords, what can I win with?! If the last match will decide everything, what were those previous ones for?! The beast went the distance I had so frantically run to in three steps, and I stood, simply watching. I couldn't move. Even if I could move, where would I go? It could catch up to me with those four legs. I was thinking, "This can't be happening" even more than being scared, and my mouth was hanging open absent-mindedly.

The moment it was going to attack me with its front claws I ducked my head in a flash. It was so close that it jumped right over me, and with the power of its leap it couldn't stop. Normally it would hit a wall.

Unfortunately, there was a corridor that way, with a person running across

with short steps. I twisted my neck painfully and tried to shout at her to watch out. Seeing her, I'm sure she's the one who brought my change of clothes yesterday.

"Watch out!"

"...Chi!"

We were all too late. Me, and Gunter, and Conrad.

The blazing beast kept lunging straight ahead, and without a scream the girl was flipped. At the same time the wolf disappeared. It knocked down the wrong target.

"...This is..."

The nearby guards rushed over, confused. A sharp pain in the right side of my chest felt like one of my ribs broke. It became painful to breathe, as my heart beat in a low bass.

"This is your victory?!"

A hot sensation began spreading from inside my body that wasn't quite from my hips or stomach. It ran through to the end of my nerves, and triggered an alarm in the back of my head.

"Involving a girl who had nothing to do with this, this is..."

Pure white smoke played in front of me.

I don't know whether or not it exists.

Someone whispered lowly inside of my ear.

Finally...

Finally, what?

And with that, my conscious...

Chapter 7

The clear sky quickly became cloudy, but the dark clouds only extended over the courtyard. A downpour that you couldn't even breathe in clapped down on the pavement. With his eyes barely open, there was a reflection of Yuuri gazing at Wolfram.

"...Your Majesty?"

Gunter's voice was trembling as he called out, but he wasn't going to turn around.

Even his voice, not even mentioning the tone, sounded like a different person.

"You refused to accept defeat, running around wildly and ignoring the rules. And then an innocent girl was dragged into it, and still you greedily want victory."

"Wh, what are you saying like some sort of actor?"

"Is this what you call a real duel?! If that's the case, I can't let people like you do whatever you want! It's not my intention to shed blood, but I have no choice, I will slice you down!"

"What?!"

Though he said "slice", Yuuri's weapon was not a sword.

"Judgement!"

It appeared at the tip of his fingers like the fire magic that Wolfram used. It was two serpents that had fangs and were the same blue as the pouring rain.



"What is this, how, that isn't a very king-like figure."

"More importantly than that, when did His Majesty make an oath with the element of water? Besides, it's virtually impossible to manipulate particles without saying the commands. How is His Majesty doing that even though no one taught him..."

As both people in Yuuri's group expressed their own thoughts, Gwendal muttered so lowly that neither of them would be able to hear it.

"I see, so it seems his soul is authentic."

"Justice" was faintly written on the translucent, glittering side of the serpents. It was really out of place. Without error it coiled around its Mazoku quarry. Wolfram let out a scream that was unlike himself, as he resisted and tried to shake it off. Every time he created flames at his fingertips, the downpour would squelch them. This was evidence that a water user had an advantage over a fire user. Victory or defeat of an embodied element was decided by the owner's status and ability.

"Get this thing off me! How the hell could you do this, so suddenly... You, who are you really?!"

"Who am I? Did you forget my other face?"

It was completely like a historical play.

"You, who selfishly snatched away an innocent life, I absolutely won't allow it!"

"Guh..."

More and more the serpents ("Justice number 1" and "Justice number 2") tightened around Wolfram trying to punish him when a soldier called out joyfully.

"He~y! She's recovered consciousness, she's not in any danger."

The girl was in the man's arms, with her eyes open as she recovered. She let out a small groan with a hand to her face.

"...I...why..."

Both, Yuuri and Wolfram saw that. Wolfram wasn't about to make excuses for

himself. If he was going to kill him, then kill him. Although it was humiliating that this sort of good-looking brat had him by the neck, it was much more honorable to die like a warrior, than kneel and beg for his life.

However, the water serpents that were even wrapping around his neck evaporated and vanished rapidly. Out of strength, he sat down. Even Yuuri's radiant eyes weren't that of a normal person as he glared, and he pointed at Wolfram, declaring,

"Wolfram, undergo a great reformation after this! Even the lord has mercy."

"M... Mercy?"

Calling himself the lord, he gave a loud splash as he hit the muddy water.

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Chapter 8

Someone washed my body. Someone took me to my room. Someone put me in bed. Someone covered me with my blanket.

And someone was whispering in my dream.

Baseball? If I'm playing baseball I'm the catcher. If it's soccer, umm, I'm the playmaker? Anyway, I send out the instructions to the team on their positions. It's the highest form of supervision.

A grade school student can't supervise.

Well, that's too bad. All right, Yuuri, play catcher. If you don't give the sign, the game won't start for a long time.

"...If I don't give the sign... The game won't..."

"Are you awake?"

I could vaguely see a white ceiling. A super beautiful man with ashen hair peered at me, and as his eyes moistened it seemed like he would cry as he bit his lip with a smile.

"...Am I... dead..."

"Please don't even say something so unlucky. Everyone all over the country has prayed, worried about Your Majesty's safety."

"That's overreacting."

Gunter shrugged his shoulders as if to say, "No way!"

"It's not overreacting, you've slept for three days."

"Three days?!"

"That's right. But this morning you were sleeping as normal, and the physician said that if you recovered from you fatigue you might wake up. There's nothing

wrong with your body."

"I figured as much, because I'm starving."

At any rate there weren't any gashes or burn marks that stood out from that fiery monster that knocked me over. Either it was extremely heavy-duty or someone threw in the towel.

"Truly, not only was I amazed, but Gwen and Conrart were as well when Your Majesty had mastered water magic. When did you make a pact with the element of water? The incarnation in the form of beautiful serpents was magnificent. Since when..."

"Water magic? Element, pact? What are you talking about? Oh yes, is that girl all right?! Umm, the girl that fiery wolf lunged at."

"Ah, yes, fortunately there was no threat to her life. Just before Wolfram's fire lunged at her, Gwendal covered the girl with a barrier, so in fact she was only thrown by a minor surge."

Gwendal? Ah, so I see he's a good person after all?

"Even so. I see, ah, that's a relief. I was thinking, 'What would I do if that girl got large burns because I was such a wimp, maybe it'd be my fault, would I be the one to blame?!', my blood was rushing to my head... Huh, why did I go down?"

"Go down... No, no, Your Majesty, Your Majesty never did anything like 'go down'..."

"You don't have to make me feel better. I didn't have a chance from the start. I'm sure I was absurdly scared, although I can't remember it."

When I flexed my muscles, while popping my neck, I waited to hear Conrad's familiar "I knew this would happen".

"What is Conrad up to? Work?"

"Work. Actually, a village near the border is having a conflict, and he went with Gwendal to quell it. They understood that Your Majesty condition wasn't serious, so they tore themselves away with great reluctance."

In what country do they still use phrases like "person of doubtful origin" and

"tore themselves away"?

From the other side of the door that was flung open, I heard a forced cough. The demon prince, Wolfram, was standing there with a sullen face. Even though he's truly a demon prince, the only adjectives I can think for the guy who would have beaten me up severely are "devil" or "Satan". Whether you called it "Jigoku" [1] or "Hell" or "Blood", I want to give it the title of a B-movie.[2]

Gunter lowered his voice with an unusually small smile, and told me;

"Well, afterwards Wolfram received a thorough reproof from Lady Cheri."

"Eh, that mother scolded her child?"

"If I were the one she got angry at , I..."

"Don't talk so much Gunter!"

The scolded third son's footsteps were loud as he approached the bed.

He looked away from me oddly, lifting his chin diagonally in an unnatural way.

"And so young partners..."

Leaving behind a meaningful phrase, the aged one left the room. "Wait~, don't leave us alone~" was what I really wanted to say, but I hung my head silently, and waited to see what he did first.

"You still have a long way to go!"

He folded his arms with his chin raised. What a stuck-up guy.

"From now on when you challenge me, come at me with your full strength! Your cheap serpents can't oppose my fire magic."

"What do you mean 'serpents'? You didn't come to apologize to me after your mother scolded you?! What's with the high and mighty attitude! You don't look like you're remorseful at all!"

"Why should I have to apologize to you?"

"Because you just changed the rules however you wanted, and used magic that I didn't know... Ah... yet..."

I finally remembered that he was defeated. At any rate I can only remember

the climax well. Perhaps I hadn't been defeated, and when Gunter said I hadn't gone down it wasn't to comfort me.

"That's enough, it's a draw, a draw. Even if it's just a draw it's well-done."

"A draw?! My victory is taking a battle to the end! But, I won't be ashamed. Who was the victor was known beforehand. If I can be knocked down by the likes of you, I can't stand the thought of myself as one of the ten nobles."

"..."

The energy I had for a retort was already lost, and I did nothing but utter a sigh. Did Wolfram's mood improve, or is he giving me a praiseworthy lecture scene even though he's an enemy.

"But my sword was thrown considerably. That's the first time I've been beaten like that. Did you fence in the country you grew up in?"

"Which one? Oh, the bases loaded homerun? No, that wasn't an art like kendo. By chance I played baseball, and the grip on the sword was like a bat, so I just swung it, ah, like I usually do."

"Are 'grip' and 'bat' the names of the weapons you're used to using?"

"No no. One of the pieces of gear you use for baseball is like a stick, as well as a glove and ball, and the pitcher throws and the batter tries to hit it, and if he does the batter becomes a runner, and the catcher takes out the runner."

"As I thought, a life and death match."

"When I said 'takes out' I didn't mean it like that. It's more about fun, an excitement."

"I don't get it, what's fun about hitting a ball with a stick?"

"Aaaah, you can't understand how fun baseball is if you don't actually see it! Ah, but I can't show you by myself... Or, this country's baseball population, which is only myself, Conrad and some kids..."

"When Conrart was talking to me, it didn't sound that great."

Because the second elder brother was brought up, it looked like it worsened the third son's mood a bit.

"He's going to his favored human village."

"Eh? I heard there was a dispute or quarrel..."

The children were in a village on the national border. Brandon, Howell, Ema, and two kids I hadn't heard the names of.

"Yes, we lent some refugees our plot of land. The wheat ripened early this season, so they're an easy target for the surrounding villages. They had a large harvest last year, so they're in all the more danger this year."

I felt like my blood suddenly drew back. Without notice my blood pressure rose, and my head reeled and there was a buzzing in my ears. Even though I should have been sitting on the bed, it felt like I was going to fall down a bottomless pit.

"What, are you worried about it? That's right, you were half human."

"How much... damage, how bad will it be... It can't be so serious that people are dying and such..."

"I've never heard of a conflict where there weren't casualties... What's wrong, Yuuri, need to go to the washroom?"

"No."

My body was mainly tottering from hunger and dehydration, so it took a lot of effort to drag myself out of bed, and I looked for my shoes.

"I have to go. I have to make sure they're ok."

"Go, huh? To the border?! You want to go see Conrart's face that much?!"

"I'm worried about the kids."

His voice was anticlimactic.

"Oh, you're worried about the refugees?"

"Shut up, this has nothing to do with you."

"Nothing to do with me! Do you plan on going out looking like that? Fix your clothes, and besides that, brush your hair, you have a horrible bedhead. Besides that do you know what time it is? At least wait until dawn breaks, until then drink something. Oh, don't eat too much, your stomach won't be able to take it."

As he rambled on and on, Wolfram called to the other side of the door. He ordered a woman different from the first girl to bring food and clothes.

"Ok."

"O, ok?"

The blond prince spoke arrogantly.

"You wanted to go? I'll give you a ride."

What's with him kindly offering me a ride even though we have such a bad relationship? Does he plan on making me fall off the horse, with an ulterior motive to take my life for sure this time? Is it really ok to ride together with this guy, or is it a trap? As I was conflicted over it for several seconds, Wolfram became more and more arrogant.

"At any rate a worthless Maoh like you can't even ride a horse by himself! I can gallop with extra luggage on my horse without any trouble, even if you seem uncertain. You're the first Maoh to be such a wimp that it can't be helped!"

"Do, don't call me a wimp!"

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Chapter 9

The village was burning.

We departed early dawn with ten soldiers on horseback, without telling Günter we were leaving the castle. I was riding with Wolfram but it was hard to deal with his wild horse-handling over such a long distance on the first day. Nonetheless I was becoming an experienced passenger and managed to endure the rough ride somehow.

The soldiers with us were terribly beautiful. Then again, they were Wolfram's private troops. In short, does that mean they all have an honorable lineage as pure-bred Mazoku?

When I feel someone's eyes on me I look up, and seeing one flying bone person (or should I say animal?) a little behind us. Why did I say I could feel its eyes when the holes in its skull are empty?

"My older brother should have arrived there by now, so everything might already be under control. It isn't that dangerous, but since you're a wimp don't go where I can't see you."

"Don't call me a wimp."

But it was already passed noon by the time we arrived, and the village was ablaze. Houses and fields. It was a considerably hot fire; even the clouds were dyed red. The soldiers ran around to prevent the shower of flames from reaching the forest, and the villagers were all lumps together away from the fence.

Women, and children, and the elderly. Everyone is dumbfounded, standing completely still. Just one elderly woman is crying and screaming.

"It's already settling down, like you said awhile ago."

"Strangely so."

"But we can already see it. Ah, what should we do? So much is burned down! I wonder if those people are ok."

Then we turned towards the village that was dozens of meters away, to try and head out of the forest quickly.

"Ignorant in the ways of the world as usual, third son."

From behind us, where only Wolfram's subordinates should have been, came an interestingly familiar voice.

"...American football guy?!"

He's the man I met the first day when he just had three men on horses with him, Denver Broncos. Let's see, if I remember right his name was...

"Adelbert was it?"

"Oh, you have a good memory! And I thought you were an idiot."

"Well sorry for looking like an idiot."

When I was the only one talking to them I turned my head to look back, and all the beautiful soldiers on horseback seemed to be frozen in place. In fact, riding in front of me, Wolfram was stiff, not even twitching.



Adelbert approached us slowly, speaking as he looked at Wolfram's profile.

"You're too much. Is it ok for the king to be protected by just ten men? Moreover, they're all pure-blooded mazoku, so they're all stuck in a simple human magic barrier. You should always have at least one soldier who can dispel magic at a time like this."

So does that mean, right now, that all of my allies but me are trapped in a barrier that keeps them from moving?! I can't believe, the place we're headed to is right in front of our eyes. Is this like a car running out of gas even though you can see a gas station?

"Yo, we meet again new Maoh."

"Hi."

It isn't clear if he's an enemy so I greeted him vaguely. Even though he seems to be enemies with the mazoku, if anything he was nice to me. When we first met he arbitrated between the villagers and me, and taught me the language.

Besides, his full name is Adelbert von Grats. Doesn't that sound like a mazoku name?

"...They can't move. Is that your doing?"

"Yeah, you could say that. It's a human magic barrier that I remembered studying a bit. Why are you riding behind this guy? How did you win over the youngest son, who only wags his tail for his mother and older brother?"

I don't think I've won him over. Besides that, this man was acquainted with Conrad, and from what he just said he seems to know Wolfram and Gwendal well, too. So why is he being hostile? I addressed this question.

"Are you really a mazoku?"

Adelbert cocked an eyebrow, his forehead wrinkling as he answered shortly.

"A long time ago."

"Then why are you on bad terms with Conrad? Why did you come here to interfere with us?"

"Because I hate them."

Hate?

"I hate them to death. Their ways disgust me. So I came to save you from their filthy hands. How pitiful, a sacrifice from another world, you should hurry and leave this place."

"Save... me...?"

"You were suddenly brought to another world, and coerced into being the new Maoh, right? The Maoh is the enemy of humans. This world has become corrupted and fallen into ruin because of his heinous existence. You look like a young human with good intentions to be made out to be such a monster. Well, isn't that too much? Don't you think that's cruel?"

When I first came to this world I was positive I was a human. I'm just an ordinary high school student. Not someone who possessed the soul of the Maoh, like Günter and Conrad and Lady Cheri expected. But no matter how many times I told them no one believed me.

"They need a sacrifice. They have to set up a king on the throne. A pure boy who doesn't know anything can't pose any resistance, which is good for them. All men hostile towards mazoku will be made to hate their leaders. That's the only reason for your existence."

"...I..."

Albert's words echoed in my ears as he stood right by me, making me speechless.

"You're a good human. That's why the magic barrier doesn't affect you. Right?"

"...Ah, I am a human... I'm not a mazoku... Or the Maoh...?"

"Don't listen to him!"

Wolfram's voice sounded hoarse as he shouted. The uneasiness made my shoulders tremble.

"Ah, huh, you could talk?!"

"Don't listen to that guy! He's..."

It wasn't just my shoulders, but my arms were wrapped around his waist and

his entire body was trembling. As he turned his head to face forward I could see beads of perspiration forming at the nape of his neck.

"That man, he betrayed us... He'll try, to bring you, into his group, too."

"Wolfram, if it hurts then don't talk."

"Well done, third son!"

The man he just called a traitor drew a long, slender sword, and pointed the tip of the sword at the mazoku prince's throat.

"Even if you don't overwork yourself by speaking, you're at a disadvantage because you have quite a bit of magic that you aren't completely in control of. If you let your senses go more easily then you would feel happier like your subordinates."

When I turned my head to look behind us, the mazoku soldiers who were following us looked like a drunk old man staggering around and their eyes stared into space.

Because of Wolfram's high pride it looked like he would burst a blood vessel.

Adelbert added insult to injury.

"Look, the humans you hate so much are setting mazoku land on fire. Wolfram, you always said it yourself. What can humans do? They're like worms, it would be a mistake if they opposed mazoku."

"Humans?!"

I leaned forward on the horse.

We leave the forest with another kick. I can see the scenes of despair and hatred from between the crevices of the trees. From the other side of the flames, silhouettes of what appear to be arrows fly through the air. There's no close combat with swords; someone is attacking someone else.

A mother is lying on the ground, covering her child. A soldier rushes up while he's crouching, firing back with his bow.

It's war.

I couldn't believe what was happening right in front of me, so I kept muttering

to myself over and over.

"This is war, war, it really is, it's real."

Perhaps on this sort of scale it could be disputed what it should be called. But, for the first time in my life I'm seeing the "real thing" and I can't think of anything but "battlefield".

"...Where and where, no, who and who? Mazoku and humans?"

An elderly person running towards the forest to take refuge, with a hunched over back, suddenly flies up. They stumble forward to fall. An arrow pierced their back. They aren't dead, but even though it's far away it catches my eye.

"Why are they shooting them, even though they're not soldiers... No matter how you look at them they can't be a soldier. That person was a villager. Shouldn't the villagers be refugees?"

The humans were setting mazoku land on fire.

But, only human children and women and elderly lived on that land.

At the beginning my voice trembled faintly. With the emotions of shock and dismay.

"Aren't they fighting their fellow men? Aren't those human soldiers attacking a village where the children who have run away live quietly?"

Wolfram spat out at Adelbert in disgust.

"You did this somehow."

"I just gave a little advice."

When I lose my balance and wobble the chestnut horse stirs lightly. The reddish brown tail swings largely left and right. The man called a traitor spoke as I watched the terrible spectacle.

"They're not disobeying the teaching of the god they believe in. Don't you know? Last year there was a record setting crop and those guys increased taxes. They collected this year using the same calculations and so there was nothing left to eat. There were only two choices; starve or get more supplies. They asked for my advice. So I told them. Their neighboring village was here in the land of

the mazoku that they should hate. Their god will not be angry if they steal from people who cultivate on mazoku land, and live on mazoku soil. They won't be charged with the serious crime of stealing from their neighbors."

"But then, if they're humans, then aren't they both humans?!"

"No, they aren't the same. This village has humans who side with the mazoku. People who side with the mazoku aren't considered their fellow humans anymore."

I grip both hands until my thumbs ache, and impatiently hit my thigh.

"I don't get it!!"

"It's fine if you don't understand. At any rate, come here and I'll take you back. You're not a mazoku, you're a human, right? You're a victim taken from another world, just because you had black hair and eyes, so that they can dress you up like the Maoh and use you as a scapegoat. Once you take sides with the mazoku, we won't be comrades again."

Adelbert lends me his hand to help me jump off the left-hand side of the horse. Between him and the horse, there wasn't much space between us. Without looking this way, Wolfram whispers lowly.

"Go."

"Eh?"

"From the looks of it, they're not planning on killing you. It'll be troublesome if you get hurt trying to resist. Go with Adelbert for now."

"But, you and everyone..."

"Don't worry about us."

I take in his words. If I leave them behind, what will happen to them?

Wolfram whispers briefly again.

"Hurry and go, Yuuri!"

I slowly turned towards Adelbert on the other side; he was holding out a hand towards me.

"That's right, Wolfram. The moment you lose this guy you'll have to summon

some new kid. Even if you're safe your elder brothers would blame you for losing the candidate for Maoh from right under your nose. It's always a wise choice to protect him rather than struggle and lose his life."

Wolfram only bit his lip; he whispered something quickly when I separated my arm. I'm not sure whether I heard him or not. I caught some of it.

"...I'll come for you. Definitely."

In the blink of one second I quickly accepted many feelings and information, and drew from them what action to take. No matter what the result would be, I gave my best answer for the situation.

Which would I not regret picking?

"Don't think I'll ride with you because you helped me."

I forcefully get off onto the ground and I was about to say that my lower body ached from riding a horse for a long time and I was going to stretch out. I'll look for a good rider among Adelbert's subordinates and try to ride behind him.

"I hate big macho builds like yours. They give me an inferiority complex. Even my face would lose."

"Then who will you ride with? Or can you ride by yourself?"

"By myself? No way!"

As I said the "way!" at the end I clapped the foot of my dazed ally with all my strength. Though the soldier didn't wake up, his spur struck the horse's stomach, and with a neigh the gray horse broke into a run. Lured by the first horse, the others begin running, too. Flinching, they were frozen in place and with my kick dashed off.

At once the sound of hooves filled the air all around as several horse-riders, both ally and enemy, ran off into the woods in disorder. As Wolfram's chestnut horse was swallowed up in the forest, only Adelbert and I were left.

"...Why did you do that?"

"Wolfram chose one last person. That person was me; only you didn't notice."

Ah, it's too bad that no weapons had been given to me to defend myself, the

last person left.

"Yuuri, I said that I would take you away from the mazoku for your sake. So why would you do something especially to screw with us, eh?"

"I decided at the last minute to stay with you. This attraction is like a bad dream. But, just because I'm staying with you doesn't mean I'm on your side. I don't need you on my team."

Because he's not in my plan I announce that he isn't part of my future plans.

"Hey, hey, don't do that!"

Adelbert stepped towards me with his gigantic sword hanging from both hands.

"I told you not to be afraid, I went through great pains worrying about you. I should have broken one of your arms or threatened you to kidnap you from the beginning."

"Pl, please spare my right arm because I'm right-handed."

"It doesn't really matter if it's your left arm. But, the quickest way..."

Apparently the person I chose wasn't right for this man.

"I'll just have to get rid of the Maoh."

"Eeek!"

That was a pathetic scream, even for me. But he's wielding such a huge, long sword, and I don't even have any fencing experience. Moreover, his weapon probably isn't used for practice. It's for actual combat.

"Were, weren't you trying to get me away from all the mazoku?! It's not too late for that now! You don't have to suddenly change your mind and kill me, I can leave the country even if I have to walk!"

"You've decided to support the mazoku. That makes you the enemy. If the mazoku have the power of the Maoh, your existence will become more and more troublesome!"

"But didn't you say it before?! I'm a normal human, they set me up as the Maoh because my hair and eyes happen to be black. You said I was a scapegoat

summoned from another world, even though I'm a normal human!"

The sounds of the blade swing around is awfully large and heavy and resounding.

"Would Shinou play a joke like that?"

"Th, th, th, then it's all a lie?! You were just talking gibberish when you said I was a normal human?!"

"I kept telling you that figuring I could get you on our side, but..."

Adelbert set his sights on me, I needed to pad the time.

"So that's what you're really like. That's too bad."

My back hits a parched trunk. There's nowhere to run behind me. Even if I dodged him once or twice, I'd be helpless after that. This wasn't like the duel with Wolfram. He had a lot of killing ability; there was also a great difference in their level of mastery.

The shadow of the sword he's brandishing over his head falls on my forehead. I gave up and closed my eyes.

When air vibrated as if a fastball had flown by a dead branch broke with a dry crack.

Splinters fell all over my legs and arms as I crouched down. Something dry and ball-shaped fell onto my lap and I gently opened one eye.

"Bo..."

One of the bone tribe that had been following me for a long time was "broken" with Adelbert's huge sword. Did it directly hit the spinal cord? It was almost completely destroyed and scattered about. The skull was sitting on my lap, and the light brown wings were going into convulsions.

He protected me?

"Kohhi, why did you..."

"That's the first time I've seen one of the bone tribe act like that. Risking its life to protect its master? Che, strange, I beheaded it."

"What do you mean by 'strange'?!"

As I apologized to Kohhi in my mind, I stood up tightly grasping part of him (maybe his thigh). Of course, I didn't think bone could stave off a sword. But, if I simply closed my eyes and waited to die his death would have been in vain.

"What do you know about Kohhi?!"

Well, I don't know much about him, either.

Making no effort to hide his true nature now, Adelbert, who appears to be the villain, smiles.

"You feel sympathy for this race that has no will. This Maoh is a common person."

"Shut up! My commonness is my selling point, and I promise to reduce the sales tax!"

As I poise the bone... My weapon, with about a 3% chance of it being effective, some reassuring horses draw near. It wasn't a prince on a white horse, but Sir Weller and Lord von Bielefeld's troops.

Unfortunately for him, he couldn't do anything about being outnumbered, and in addition without a horse he couldn't do anything about it even if his hostage ran away. Adelbert dispersed and disappeared before the reinforcements came. Conrad ordered several of his subordinates to chase after him, and instructed them to locate him. Never approach him more than necessary, and don't try anything even if you think you have a chance. Because their lives were in danger here.

"They probably scattered."

Other than that, we exchange an embrace that would put the foreign actors to shame, and sand was thrown at Wolfram somehow.

"I'm relieved, Yuuri. I thought it would be too late."

"I'm relieved, too. I can finally understand what it feels like when men hug each other firmly in the movies."

They were just like this. While we pat each other on the back, Conrad's voice stiffened.

"By the way, what is that hard thing hitting my back?"

"Oh, this? A bone."

"A bone. Oh, I see, it is a bone. And what was your Majesty planning on doing with it?"

"Umm, I was using it as a club."

I energetically separate our bodies. I furrow my brows.

"I can't believe it, you were planning on fighting Adelbert..."

"But I couldn't let myself be killed."

"Ah, your Majesty, did you think it was like the time with Wolfram?! He and Wolf aren't even in the same league."

"Well excuse me for not being in the same league!"

The third son dismounted from his chestnut horse, and kicked the underbrush sourly. Though the effects of the demon seal had worn off, I couldn't compliment him on his complexion.

"Are you ok, Wolfram?"

"Hnn, there's no reason for you to worry about me."

"If that's the case I'm not worried, but-

"He's paying for his mistakes. He did as he liked and brought your Majesty here."

Even if the youngest brother was scolded, he doesn't seem to have a speck of shyness. I quickly changed the subject from what I had asked about.

"Besides that, how did you get here so quickly?"

"I was too slow. I was fighting near the border across the village, but the bone tribe that followed our troops sensed its companion's predicament. As I told you, they have a peculiar ability to communicate their thoughts. They can have conversations with only their spirits if they're not far away. So, I left that place to Gwen and met Wolfram and them while galloping here..."

"That's right! What should we do about Kohhi!"

I scraped up the remains scattered around the tree roots, and placed the skull

gently in the center.

"Poor Kohhi... You gave your life for me... I'm really sorry, you might have had a wife and kids."

Although its sex is still uncertain. I can at least make a simple grave, and leave flowers on the anniversary of his death and equinoctial week. I know it's bad but I begin to dig through the grass with his own thighbone.

"Ah, just a minute, your Majesty, you shouldn't bury him."

"What are you saying? We can't leave Kohhi out here to get weather-beaten!"

"Because we have a responsibility to collect him. If he's buried how will he fly again?"

"Huh?"

"So, if we put him back together properly he'll be able to fly again."

"He, he's not dead?"

"There are a lot of mysteries about how they live."

"Really? You can really put him together like a plastic model? Then you won't make into a strange new living thing by putting weird bones in?"

"It's fine, we have expert engineers."

A professional modeler? But I'm glad. Above all I want him to live.

When we finally came back out of the forest to return to the village, Conrad earnestly gave detailed instructions as he was dealing with the enemy soldiers who failed to escape.

"Although we're approaching the end, there's still remnants of resistance. Don't stray off where I can't see, all right? Because people hit by stray arrows lose their lives."

"S, stray arrows?"

That reminds me, what happened to that elderly person who was struck by something like a stray arrow earlier? While being careful not to leave Conrad's field of vision, I headed for the corner where injured people were gathered.

The cloth raised up to ward off sparks reminded me of the aid tents at sports festivals. But it wasn't a peaceful atmosphere under the roof; there were more than twenty injured people, lying down on top of the grass. While I stand there dumbfounded, people are carried in one by one.

They aren't mazoku nor man nor villager. They shout, and groan and cry.

A pale-skinned girl restlessly moves around by herself. Günter had called them a clan with healing hands. Is she, in a word, a medic? It seems in this country both men and women go to the battlefield. They're oddly progressive on that point.

"If there's something I can do to help..."

The girl raises her face and is amazed when she sees me. She looks around Wolfram's age but she must be older than me.

"No, your Majesty! Not at all, I can do this by myself."

"But more and more are coming."

"Umm, umm, excuse me for being so unsightly in front of your Majesty. Please, your Majesty, go and give directions to the soldiers."

I shook my head; it looks like I set foot on her territory.

"You're not unsightly at all... Everyone is hurt and suffering, and I'm not the type to give orders to troops."

As a new person is carried in the medic's mood seems to change. She handed me a box that seemed to be a first-aid kit, and pointed at the man near the entrance.

"This is inexcusable but could you please use this disinfectant on the patients with minor injuries over there? You will need to wear gloves. The cloth and scissors are here. Umm, your Majesty, do you have any experience giving aid to injured soldiers..."

"None but, maybe, I don't think I'll faint."

Because I've seen wounds like a pitcher hitting a batter with the ball, or from sliding or from cleats. The female soldier's expression seemed relieved, and she went to examine the patients with serious wounds. I boldly sprinkled antiseptic

solution on a man who had cut his thigh. It wasn't like a cut from cleats; the flesh was open and pink.

"That's rough luck, you got hit without any armor. But don't worry, the wound is shallow. The proof is that I can't see any bone or muscle."

My hand trembled.

"That, your Majesty, that's too good for you..."

"Too good? The medicine must sting. Hey, just a sec, how about this salve?"

The young lady bowed her head towards me. There was a yellow gel inside the kit smeared on a large gauze bandage. I don't know whether I learned it in health class or the boy scouts, but wide bandages are wrapped around the thighs. The man continued repeating that it was "too good". Next, giving it all I've got, I examine the lacerations and burns.

I'm only a relatively active person but I've gotten plenty of scratches and bruises during extracurricular activities, but even so this was a "field hospital". After I treated some patients with minor injuries, a man lying face down was next.

There was a cut diagonally across his back but thanks to his clothes there wasn't too much bleeding.

He looked like a merchant who was attacked to test out a new sword. His light brown hair hung down to his dirty collar. A silver coin on a leather strip was moved behind his neck. Is it a good luck necklace or money from a country somewhere? Without much thought I tried to grab the glittering one yen coin.

"Don't touch me."

"Eh, ah, excuse me! I wasn't going to take anything, it's just kind of pretty so..."

"Don't touch me! Are you going to kill me?! Because mazoku won't let humans live."

"I... I won't kill you..."

The man grimaced as he tried to raise his body and groaned in pain. I don't understand all of the curses he repeats at me. He didn't look this way.

"Are you human?"

"Naturally, damn it, and you're with those mazoku! Damn, if you're going to kill me hurry and do it."

"I'm not going to kill you. What, are you scared of putting disinfectant on wounds as a grown man?"

"Disinfectant? Don't lie to the good people now, a mazoku saving humans?! You mazoku kill humans, so we kill mazoku back."

Neverminding that I put the fluid on his wound.

"I'm not going to kill you, be quiet already! Proof of that is that humans live in that village, don't they? If mazoku kill humans, then why are people living there?! It's you people who went there to destroy their quiet lives."

That's right, humans attacked the village, with swords turned against humans. The arrows were shot.

Even though they were both human.

The man turned his head to look at me, and I looked down on him from where I was standing.

"It's ok to destroy that place! That village sold their souls to the mazoku, it doesn't matter if we steal from them, naturally we'd burn a village like that! Our god forgives us; he lent us power to punish the mazoku!"

Because of the pain and bleeding, his laughter became slightly hysterical.

"God has chosen humans!"

"...What kind of god is that?"

The soldier with a bandage wrapped around his head got up next to us in a swaying motion.

"...What are you... saying to his Majesty..."

There wasn't a pause. He grips his sword, aiming his sword at the neck of the shouting human.

"Da..."

"Stop!"

The sword sharply cut through the air, and dug into the soft ground. The man's head was still attached to his torso. Fortunately, the weapon had broken. The medic girl lifted the man's chin and quickly applied a wet cloth to his nose. The injured man lost his strength, and his face pressed on the grass dead tired.

"When the wounded are excited, I'm afraid we have to put them to sleep."

As if this sort of trouble happens often, she smiles without losing her cool.

"Excuse me if I offended you, but, they're always unbelievers. You there, and you, watch what you do. All patients carried into my workplace are treated equally. I won't allow you to hurt one another! Ah, your Majesty."

She looked at me as I watched, overwhelmed, and saw the gem cradled at my neck.

"Is that an offering from his Excellency Conrart?"

"Eh, yeah."

"I see."

I don't know what she remembered when she nodded her head slightly and moved on to the next wounded person.

"It suits you, very well."

I staggered back to where Conrad was before, who had been giving orders to the soldiers. Soldiers came with clothes scorched here and there, reporting of a well.

"I see, don't get too close. Dig as wide as you can into the soil to entirely enclose it."

The subordinate bowed briefly and ran off.

With his arms folded, Wolfram didn't look particularly serious.

"When big brother comes back he should have the ground swallow this village. That way the fire will be put out and it won't spread to the forest."

"And what of the villager's homes and land? And the fields they worked so hard to clear?"

"Hnn, the fires were set by humans like them, so they should resign themselves to their fate."

Humans like them.

For no reason I'm drained of strength, and I weakly squat down there.

"Your Majesty."

Conrad kneels down, gently placing a hand on my back.

"Why did they do this...? Just because they wanted some food... I was sure that a mazoku who despised humans, like Wolfram and Gwendal, had attacked the village out of hate."

Wolfram snorted as if to say he resented that.

"Why would we do that? This has been mazoku land since the beginning. Setting a fire causes wildlife and vegetation loss. Besides, look at the fire that has even reached the forest! That's not something that can be restored in a year or two."

The houses blazing up with dark smoke finally crumble down miserably. The farmland that was green and gold only a few days ago was licked by flames now. Several of the domestic animals had taken refuge in the forest.

"Why would humans do this to each other..."

Conrad was interrupted by a falling spark and pulled my shoulder back.

"I can sort of understand why you mazoku are hostile towards humans. Basically, umm, I can't explain it well but, it's sort of like how killer whales and dolphins are on bad terms... But that discord is because you're born different, I think I can understand it somehow. But why would humans be opposed to each other?"

That man's hysterical laughter from earlier ran around in my head.

"Isn't it like dolphins biting one another?! What kind of god wouldn't be angry at such meaningless, cruel things?!"

Falling between mazoku and human, I can't read his feelings in his low mutter.

"Well then."

Soldiers' voices of fatigue and despair rise up, as the ashes of burned wheat fly away.

It falls and piles up on the grass, dancing around again when it's scattered by hooves.

Over and over again. Until it returns to the ground again.

"Then on the world your Majesty is from, humans don't fight each other?"

"...That's..."

The blaze illuminates the figures of the riders approaching. Subdued by only three riders, the man was dragged along in a large lump of cloth, thrown out in front of us and looked at a group of villagers.

"This..."

The person in the old rags came into sight. An arrow pierced through the right shoulder of the soldier's uniform, his eyes were red from blood from his forehead. With a pale face and low voice, a peasant man muttered it was more baggage. Though I can't see any injuries, both his arms and legs seem to be twisted strangely.

Bones.

Imaging the pain, I barely manage to gulp down the vomit that's welling up.

"Clean up over there right away. Although nearly all escaped from across the border."

Even in such a serious situation, Gwendal's expression didn't change much. As always he was sullen and handsome, and with the exception of blood spatter from other people on his clothes he didn't have any traces of combat.

After he raised his eyebrows slightly at the youngest brother who had come, he began to talk to his younger brother about the situation as a soldier.

"Adelbert fed this man lies to provoke him. It's no wonder that they were so skilled. Former soldiers who had lost their way were definitely involved. It seems

there was a fire wielder among them. That's why the fire is so powerful."

"There's no sign of it weakening at all. We sent a message with one of the bone tribe at noon, but a magic user hasn't arrived yet so what can we do besides hold out until then? We'll do whatever we can to protect just the forest."

"Well, without their assistance we can merely watch. Or..."

Realizing I'm a spectator myself, I bite my lip and hung my head in shame. Gracefully dismounting, Gwendal ordered a subordinate to take his over-excited horse away from the flames, and standing up straight he looked here.

"Are you going to suppress the flames roaring over this village with that commendable water magic like that one time?"

"What do you..."

Water magic like that one time? Anxiety smolders in my chest. Günter also said something about water. Something about forming an avatar with an element and pact.

Do I take responsibility for something that happened that I can't remember?

"Big brother, it seems this guy can't remember what happened."

Wolfram said it bluntly, as if it had no significance.

"You can't call that miracle anything but luck, he was only able to do it unconsciously. In other words, the Yuuri we have now not only can't handle swords or magic, he's also an amateur at riding horses."

"A miracle, that I? What kind of incredible miracle did I cause?"

Conrad is glancing at me apologetically. That glance brings to mind the eyes of the homeroom teacher in the student guidance room. You don't need to make that sort of face, because I got kicked off the team for hitting the coach. Because I did it myself, and don't regret it in the slightest. They called my mom and after she apologized to coach and the teacher in charge of that grade for the fact he got punched, and she laughed and asked. So coach, what did he do? There was a bit of a bad incident where this kid got pissed off and punched me. Yuu-chan's been like that a long time, as a child he had a strange policy type of thing, and when anything happens to contradict it it's like he blows his top. Well, when he

forgets himself like that he just wants to protect those seven letters, "justice".

Among the teachers, they seemed to conclude like mother like son.

If you believe what my mom said, I'm enforcing a small-town sense of justice.

But now, even if I try to recreate it I can't remember it offhand...

"Anyhow, if he can't be useful he can at least stay out of the way."

It seems like the eldest son didn't seriously expect that.

One elderly woman is drawn out from the villagers who are gathered shoulder to shoulder. Unkempt blond hair and a stream of tears cling to her cheeks, frightened in front of the extremely beautiful nobles, particularly mazoku. A soldier gives the woman his sword, and leads her to the cowering enemy nearby. Gwendal said:

"These people burned your villages. Kill him, humiliate him, do as you like."

"What the hell?!"

He glares with an expression that says, 'You again?'. But I can't let things be. As always, it's me.

I've thrown out the conduct I've learned according to a different world.

But, that's me.

I clench my fist, and stand between the woman and injured soldier. The lone challenger of the influential mazoku.

"You can't. Isn't this guy, in short, a prisoner of war?! There are rules for how you treat a prisoner of war. It says the wounded will have the equal treatment to the girl a bit ago."

"Conrart, do something about this troublemaker."

"I can't do anything about it."

As if Gwendal was a little irritated he put a hand to his forehead.

"That would be the story if he was an average soldier, these are ringleaders."

"It's the same thing, you can't deal out capital punishment as you please even if he's a ringleader! He needs a proper lawyer, and his guilt will be decided in

trial..."

I desperately try to persuade the woman who hasn't lifted the weapon.

"Ma'am, don't be coaxed by such a thoughtless group. No matter how famous they are, there's still bad and good. I learned enough in compulsory education to know you can't kill prisoners as you please. Whether it's junior high history or citizen's or whatever, it's banned because it becomes capital punishment."

"I... that..."

"That woman hasn't received an education. It's troublesome if they defy the nobles, so we don't like to give the human citizens unnecessary intelligence. Compulsory education is absurd."

"There's no compulsory education~?!"

In a world of swords and magic, what's going on with people's rights?

Although it may not be an effective argument but it seems that I've avoided capital punishment for the time being as the woman stands there hesitantly. I can't be relieved as I look around the area. For example, the fireman holding a symbol bearer,[1] or going back to a basic bucket brigade. But I don't see water anywhere. Everyone is digging up soil and pouring it on.

"Why aren't they pouring water on it to extinguish it?"

I calmly ask Conrad.

"Because the well isn't close. Besides, the blaze was started by a magic user, a little bit of water won't put it out at all. A normal fire would spread too slowly because they were ordered to burn up the target; unless we have a lot of water we can't compete just using water. Gwendal is a skilled earth magic user, so he thought to pile up the dirt to isolate it but the influence it has below ground might be too large, and the forest may need to be sacrificed... All we can do is wait for a magic user who can manipulate water."

Manipulate water. Isn't that what I did? I don't remember it, that time is a blank slate.

Wolfram was standing with a hand on his hip, and asked his elder brother in a trembling voice.

"Is this attack on our land a reason for a proclamation of war?"

"...Well, it's a good enough reason."

A proclamation of war?

Those words were rarely heard in the daily life of an average fifteen year old; I kept repeating those four words over and over in my head. A proclamation of war, a proclamation of war, a proclamation of war.

A proclamation of war?

"'A proclamation of war'?! You're going to wage war because of this?! This isn't a joke by some chance?"

I was ignored.

"...Think about it from different sides, Wolfram. Not a single regular soldier joined them. If we make this attack the main reason for declaring war, they can escape by discarding just one village. We need something certain."

"Then they can do what they want to remote regions of the country while we sit back and watch quietly?"

"You guys, listen!!"

They only glance at me, without looking as if they're going to give me a serious response.

The blood is rushing to my brain at a reckless speed. If my blood vessel was cut right now I'd lose it all. While I try to choose my words calmly, my mouth is stiff, and the tip of my voice trembles.

"Do you know any defense-only policies?! Anyhow, that means just protecting yourselves! That means never fighting yourself! That modern day Japan abandoned war for pacifism, and it's even written clearly into the constitution?! Being a Japanese person born and raised in Japan, of course I oppose war, too, not just 'oppose' but 'strongly oppose'!"

I point at Conrad, my tone raises at the end of the word as I speak.



"Humans also fight each other on Earth, didn't you tell me that a little while ago?! Ah, they do, it's not untrue at all. But at those times there's always someone trying their hardest to stop it! The majority of the world's population want peace!"

I shout out halfway out of frustration. I don't understand Wolfram's or whoever's hot tempers.

"Is that the content of your conversations?! Purposely waiting silently until you have something more certain you can start a war with?!"

"...Don't shout."

Gwendal frowned like he was suppressing a headache. But my nickname is the Turkish March.

"Discuss it, discuss it! The farmland of the citizens of your country was burned. What are you going to do about it; how can it be secured? I want to absolutely avoid fighting, can't it be neatly dealt with domestically so that we don't need to from now on? That is, solve it by discussing it."

"Don't shout, foreigner from a different world!"

"No, I'll shout, I'm allowed to shout! I'll be Japanese until I'm twenty, even if I have the soul of the Maoh, I'll be Japanese until I come of age. I think Japan is more peaceful than this country, so even if you tell me to stop I'll continue talking! I oppose war, completely oppose, I'll oppose it my whole life, even if in death I'll oppose it!"

"So you've died once?!"

"Not bloody likely!"

I did it, I thought. Calmly, Gwendal, who didn't try to treat me like anything more than a cupid-statue peeing into a fountain in a garden, was caught up in an argument with me. Now that it's come to this I won't back down.

No matter how threatening looking like the Maoh is.

"You have no interest in becoming the king, so you don't have a say about our country! I have a duty to defend Shin Makoku, and an obligation to consider our national interest. The exaggerated ethics and lukewarm methods might be fine

for place you call 'Japan' that you grew up in. But this is us; mazoku have mazoku methods!"

"Then I'll change that! I'll change the Mazola ways from scratch!"

This sky isn't dirty, this land isn't poisoned, this forest isn't in disorder, this world is beautiful. But there's something strange about this world.

"You guys are beautiful and cool, but the problem is you have bad personalities! Such as discriminating against humans, dangerous customs, privileged classes and liking war. So much so that when the other party mentions pacifism it's outrageous! They're both humans, but because they live on mazoku land it's ok to attack them! Doesn't that sound stupid?! 'God lends you power to fight', what sort of disturbing faith is that?!"

"Your Majesty."

Of the three brothers, only Conrad calls me "Your Majesty". His topaz eyes seem to pierce me by surprise.

"They're absolutely mistaken, but even so it's useless to get us roped in. Even if we're in the right, war is a mistake."

Sorry, Conrad, the March can't stop during the climax. I feel dizzy from a lack of oxygen to my head. Who are we? What group am I joining? Wasn't I a human?

"If the King says we can't go to war, would the citizens obey that?"

"Your Majesty."

I spoke deeper and deeper, and shouted the next part.

"...I will become the Maoh..."

"Yuuri?!"

"I'll become Shin Makoku's king."

If I don't give the signal the game won't start for a long time.

The fire spread to the back fence. That sound of something like a small explosion is covered by a woman's scream.

"What..."

Trying to turn around, my body is bent and I have a coughing fit. A blow to my right ribs chokes the air in my lungs.

"Don't move!"

I'm in a full nelson with my chin being held unreasonably hard. A heavy metal touches my throat and chest and someone's breath is right next to my ear.

The cowering ringleader snatched the weapon from her hands. His eyes glittered, reddened with blood, and he took rough breaths with excitement and pain. Arrows were stuck in his shoulder and legs.

"Nobody move, if you move I'll cut this guy's throat."

I tried to turn my eye just barely to the side to see the man's face.

"It's useless for you to resist, either!"

"I understand..."

Extremely timid.

"I wonder if the Great Maoh will keep his lips shut. Like us underlings."

Someone clicks their tongue. Who is it?

I'm dragging along while he's moving, and the man speaks in a voice that's partially holding in laughter.

"If you're really the Maoh, is it really this simple? For a common soldiers like myself."

"...Ch..."

"Even though I'm not going to try and take you anywhere. If you guys even try to say a fragment of a spell, I'll probably die but he'll definitely lose his life, too! Don't get any ideas about going anywhere, I'm a soldier of twenty years too."

A pain like heat runs through my neck. Maybe there's a shallow cut in the skin.

The man carefully distanced himself from the mazoku, and demands a horse, water and food rations.

"You're acting like you're dying but aren't you the brat who said you're the Maoh right in front of us? But you're no good with swords or magic, I wonder if

you're really the Maoh?"

"...I... can't... help... it..."

The tip of the sword touching my throat hurts but my ribs that were punched in hurt more. Each time I breathe my eyes tear up.

"Well, either way, there aren't two people born in this world with black hair and eyes. Even if you're not the King, I need to take you along to earn a ton of money. Didn't you know? They say you can gain eternal life if you get a person with black hair and eyes, I have colleagues who'll pay a load of money for that."

I heard it. Three or six days ago. Even though I can't control my own life and death, I can become a miracle cure for others; is there such an absurd life?! I shut my eyes tightly.

I'm sorry for shouting awhile ago; I'm sorry, so please save me. With all my might I raise my eyes, but not one ally makes a move, they watch with their breath caught at a distance.

The horse is pulled over, and a small quantity of water is put in the saddle bags.

Perhaps this moment is the beginning of my last chance? It's not possible for two people to get on simultaneously, even less so a hostage with a blade pointed at him. So, is the only chance right now?

"Get on."

The man turned the sword to my back. Seems he's planning to go through from behind. Unable to tell him honestly that I can't ride alone, I timidly put my foot in the stirrup.

It was the instant I crossed my right leg over the saddle.

A small black shadow quickly approached, and the arrow in the man's leg is pulled out.

The man screams like a frog. The sword cuts the tawny brown hide, and the timid grey horse neighs in a high pitch. It lifts its front legs, throws off its "baggage", and runs in fear.

"Darnit..."

When I thought my body was floating through the air, it crashed on a different hard surface; the ground. My ribs from before ache again, and I can't breathe in oxygen without it hurting.

"...Egh..."

My fingers grasp my chest and happen to fall onto something warm.

It's blood.

I can't see anything but the shadow of Conrad's back backlit. There was a shadowy mass at his feet.

The man had doubled over and collapsed. He shed fresh, red blood.

"...Is he dead?"

"Who knows."

There's a voice under my body, and in a rush I move my hips onto the grass.

Gwendal wiped off the mud and ash on his clothes. Why is this man under me? There's no time to ask the question.

Perhaps when I was thrown off the grey horse, because I catch sight of the small pitiable person who saved me.

The flames are already approaching there. Lying upside-down, the boy doesn't move despite the heat.

"...Hey..."

Fair-headed children with good physiques stood nearby.

"Brandon"

"Yuuri, it's dangerous, let me."

Staggering, I shake off Conrad's arm and get near the flames.

This child, because of humans setting fires, because of this malicious flame that someone started, because of this cowardly flame that can't be put out...

"Brandon!"

From the side a large fire flies, and somehow Conrad mowed it down.

"Brandon?!"

The boy turns up his face and I lift him onto my knee. His eyes were barely open, and he moved his lips. He's alive!

"...Your Majesty..."

"You don't have to call me 'Your Majesty'."

"...But, you're... going to... become the king..."

"Brandon."

I'll protect this village, I'll protect you, I promise that; I promise.

Something dripped onto the boy's cheek.

"I promise."

"Will you... t... teach me, how... to pitch?"

"I promise!"

Thunder suddenly pierces my ears, seeming in synchronization with my cry.

It whispers sweet, gentle and joyful things into my ear canals.

The rain begins to beat the ground...

Until every last one of us is dripping.

It seems it was a rare downpour.

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Chapter 10

"Uuugh, I can't believe it, why did it come to this?"

As I stared at the marble corridor outside the guestroom door, I put up with my nausea.

"It couldn't be helped; it's because you declared you were absolutely going to become the king."

Conrad is grinning unlike a noble, leaning against a pillar that could reach the sky.

"Even so, the coronation... I haven't seen a coronation like the one in figure 8 of the history textbook..."

"Only one person can nominate you; the presenter, Mother."

"You talk like it's the Academy Awards."

Until a bit ago Günter was with us, too, but as usual he sang my praises and ran off to prepare the ceremony. He praised my uniform, and one more thing, the incident in the village.

"But I don't remember using so much water magic at all..."

I can't comment on a pinpoint of the downpour; when the village was extinguished it stopped like it never happened. When a group of magicians arrived from the capital city, the smoke was just going up from the smoldering trees and wheat.

I only remember Brandon myself. After that it cuts off to pure white. Even if I get grandiose praise about saving the country, it's hard to believe that I, a completely ordinary freshman, did it.

"As I explained to you, majutsu is a quality of the soul. Your majesty, having the soul of the maou, can make the four elements obey you gladly, without going

through the trouble of taking the oath and such things."

Without anyone's consent, it seems Günter spread around my personal affairs. Conrad is a little bit more objective.

"I think a place we rested on the way to the capital is suspicious. You and I drank water then. Though I don't understand magic because I don't have it, I can't help but feel that had something to do with it."

"Don't worry about that."

It's a miracle I didn't remember it myself.

From the far side of the corridor, the blond with wavy hair comes running. The intense navy blue uniform suits him; the mazoku Prince Wolfram. With a sigh I mutter to this beautiful man, Günter.

"What with this plain design?"

"...Huh?"

I was essentially told immediately after that it was a design developed only for His Majesty, and the black clothes I originally came in suited me the most.

"You don't have any shoulder straps or accessories. Do you seriously think it's okay for you to look so miserably poor if you're going to become the Maou?!"

He glances here and there without looking at my face. It might be my imagination but his usually white, smooth cheeks were a slight red.

"Appearing without any treasure, don't embarrass my older brother and me!"

Before I could open my mouth to respond, Wolfram grabbed my chest and fastened a shiny golden decoration to me.

"Hey..."

"My uncle Bielefeld gave this to me when I was a child. It doesn't have any special origin, but it suits someone who hasn't gone out on the battlefield, let alone military merit. Anyway, considering Yuuri can't even ride a horse, he's the wimpiest king in history."

"Don't call me a wimp~."

"All right, settle down."

When he says all that in unnaturally fast speech, Wolfram half-runs away. The present fastened to the left side of my chest is a gold bird with both wings spread. Conrad smugly gazes after his little brother's back.

"It seems Wolfram has taken a liking to Your Majesty."

"Eeeeeh?! That haughty Prince Whatever?!"

To escape from that topic I open the door a crack, and peeking inside I get a bad feeling again. Noble princes from here and there have gathered to this country from various places today, in addition to representing various families, and some here and there that had human-like shapes.

The flying bone race that I've befriended and their relatives, the ground bone race, like gargoyles on an American building, people with four legs that look like gray leopards, palm-sized petit-macho men that make the sound of an aburazemi[1] (maybe a fairy), and a huge tuna lying on the soaked floor conspicuously.

"A... tuna?"

I keep reminding myself that I have to get used to it, because they were all citizens. They don't look human, no, they don't look like mazoku. I began to forget my policy speech because of too much tension.

My aspiration as the Maoh; a plan for the Japanization of Shin Makoku.

"Umm, on the dawn of my inauguration as the twenty-seventh Maoh, my ultimate goal is to switch over to pacifism and popular sovereignty.... Oeeh... Conrad, I think I'm going to hurl... I'm so stressed... My stomach hurts... I need to get to a toilet again, where's the toilet?"

"Again?"

"Not 'again', it's my stomach. My stomach!"

"We don't have time for that, Your Majesty!"

The teacher in the white, tight Chinese clothes runs by with a worried look on his face.

"It will begin sooner or later. Are you all right, Your Majesty? As I explained, after you progress down the center, when you ascend the platform the former

Queen, Her Majesty Cecilie will coronate you... Of course, even if we didn't perform the ceremony, the people's loyalty to Your Majesty wouldn't waver, your form has that effect in and of itself..."

"Gah, that's enough, so tell me what to do."

"I'm relieved to hear that. You're very determined. Just seeing the promising form of Your Majesty..."

Overcome with emotion, Günter, who was entering the "old geezer" mode, passed by the expressionless man. I panicked as Gwendal lays his hand on the door.

"Wait a minute, is it okay for you go in before me?"

Not just in looks but also in personality, the eldest brother who was probably the most suitable for the role of Maoh with the same pout on his lips as usual, forced a smile. That's a big treat.

"I've been assigned the honorable role of giving the crown to the Former Queen."

"Is that right? I thought you were still going to get me to spoil the ceremony. Because you're opposed to me becoming the king."

"Opposed? Me?"

His dorsal muscles freeze, looking like a smile, and with one step back he takes my chin in his fingers. Ah, there's an absolute height difference. But this isn't like in basketball or volleyball, or, I'm afraid to say, baseball; being tall shouldn't be related to being a catcher or a king.

"It's outrageous that I would do something like oppose you. I sincerely wish for you to become a good king."

"By 'good' you mean..."

"A compliant, submissive, meek king."

"You just plan on having the king at your disposal?!"

From behind Günter, who has become like an overprotective mother to me, Conrad carefreely said something unrelated. Come to think of it, it feels like that.

"Which reminds me, Gwen, Anissina came over."

The man who was usually a cool sale scowled at that instant. I've never seen such a scowl since I was born. With a click of hi tongue he disappeared on the other side of the door. I was surprised; even Gwendal has a weak point.

"Well, Your Majesty, are you all right? Are you tense? Take a deep breath, breathe in and exhale."

"Why are you doing it yourself?"

Accompanied by Günter and Conrad, I advanced down the center of the hallway as I was told. Jet-black petals were spread all over. It's a bad omen. Queen Cecilie waited on the platform and I approached on the stone staircase, with shiny golden curls and a sexy crimson dress.

"You, you're beautiful, Lady Cheri."

She had a full smile.

"Thank you, Your Majesty. But you don't need to fawn over me right now. Today, you're the lead actor."

We stood in our positions just like artists at a live venue. There's a small, artificial waterfall at the front of the stage, I spread my hands in the middle leaving a softball sized hole. The water falls quietly to the side, making a thin passageway.

"Well then, Your Majesty, put your right hand in the center of the waterfall, and listen to the will of Shinou."

"Huh? But isn't Shinou dead?"

"Eeh? But only people led to the hole in Shinou's shrine who are allowed to become the Maoh can put a finger in there. And if Shinou recognizes the new Maoh, he'll clasp your hand gently."

All she says about a person who should be dead is "Eeh?"?!

Lady Cheri brought her lips near my ear, only pretending to whisper.

"I was able to put my fingers in, but no one grabbed back. After I waited a bit to make it look important, I raised the hand that was going to come out high.

Like Shinou really acknowledged me. See, Your Majesty, that's not really difficult at all, is it?

From behind Günter pesters me.

"Your Majesty, hurry."

"Even if you say to..."

I stand in front of something like the Mouth of Truth, a tourist spot in Italy, with my right hand hanging in the air, hearing the sound of water cascading with a "swish" sound.

"If I lie won't it bite me?"

"No way. This is made of solid stone. It won't make any sudden moves."

That's right. When I timidly put my right hand near the dark hole, my index finger and middle finger enter together. It's cool as I expected, and the air around it is saturated with moisture. Boldly, I put my hand in up to my wrist.

"Ah, that was good, if you give it a try there's nothing to the ceremony. All that's left it to put on airs and lift up your arm..."

Huh?

My fingertips hit something. Probably the inside wall.

"Your Majesty?"

Günter peers at me worriedly.

"Huh... Uwah, wah, there's, there's..."

Something cold grips my fingers.

"So, something's, grabbed me, uwah, yah, Conrad, what's got me?!"

"Got you?!"

With frightening strength, my right arm is pulled in. Wait, hey, I'm being pulled into a man-made waterfall, so a wall should be on the other side of the water!

Am I going to be crashed into a wall and finished off?! Before that, who does this power to pull me...

"Dohwahp!"

I'm thrust into the face from the face with a shriek like a chorus member. Günter tries to grab the back of my clothes and left arm frantically. Conrad calls my name and grabs my belt. But there's a wall of water between us, and only the warped sounds reach me.

Even though there's a wall of water, the wall of stone that should be there isn't. When I'm drawn in I gasp for air... While I'm gasping I get a sense somewhere in my head. When I came to this world it was through a public Western-style toilet. My return ticket is the same mode of transportation. But this time the water is cleaner, better. I got a little bit of an upgrade; is this business class?!

After that it was just like Star Tours.

Ya...ya...ya...

What is this, a mark of absence from a sumo match? I don't know whether saying "ya" repeatedly is for yariika, yankees or yanbaru kuina.^[2] Yanbaru kuina, that's awful nostalgic.

Close to my ear the "Abarenbou Shogun Theme" rings, and I awoke surprised by Kintetsu's Chance. It's nothing but my own blue cell-phone, ringing to the set timer.

"Shibuya."

"Uwah, you surprised me!"

It was the "ya" in Shibuya. After he shakes my shoulder I spring to my feet, and I noticed it was the guy in glasses that I went to junior high with that was calling my name. Who was he, aah, Ken, Murata Ken.

My nose is soaked like I was drinking water in a pool. The wet cloth is stiff, hard and heavy, and my skin was cooled by an unpleasant dampness. I narrowed both my eyes to try and shake my field of vision somehow and saw my surroundings. It was a gloomy public women's restroom, with ashen walls, a light blue door, to my back a mismatched brand of Western-styled toilet, and a paper holder that has nothing to do with it. Peering at me is Murata Ken; two or three steps away is a uniformed policeman.

"Murata Ken... You didn't run away?"

"I couldn't run away and leave behind someone who tried to help me."

The policeman asks if I'm ok. And if I wanted to take a damage report, or if I knew the assailant's names and such.

I was dumbfounded.

The night game is starting.

After that, with the soft lights in the courtyard, I recalled a night game with someone else. I recall the promise I made to a child who didn't even know how to spell 'baseball'. I recalled most of my dream.

"Murata... I had some sort of amazing dream."

"What was it?"

I shook my head quietly. I couldn't even begin to tell him, it was too long.

"Ah, I see. Well, Shibuya, I had something I wanted to ask you but..."

The moment I try to stand up, a cold gem touches my skin under the clothes. After that, a momentary flash of light draws my attention to the golden wings on the breast of my uniform. I grip the golden wings tightly in my left hand.

It, wasn't a dream?

Günter, Wolfram, Gwendal, Cheri, Brandon... Conrad.

"...Was it, really a dream?"

"Eh?"

Murata Ken reaches out a hand to me with a vague smile.

"But the belt for your pants snapped off and... Well, I didn't want to ask because it's a question about your personal hobbies but..."

Suddenly, when I look down at myself, my belt is torn off, my button has flown off, and my fly is completely open. Peeking out there was the sexy underwear all mazoku purveyors wore...

"Uhyah"

Damnit, maybe it wasn't a dream...

It's not over.

It seems this isn't the end of the game.

[Back to Top](#) [Return to MA Series](#)

Afterword

Are you in a good mood? This is Takabayashi.

Finally, my paperback book has made it's miraculous debut. When I loitered at the corner new book display, I could only sigh. Though I haven't won a prize or name, nevertheless it's a novel with fantasy (I'm super weak at that), first person (intensely weak) and almost all beautiful people except for the main character (tearfully weak). It's making is a considerable miracle. That makes my heart throb. This book is about a senior high school student who gets flushed to another world by petty chance; it's a fast story that's a fantasy anyway you look at it. But, it's a joke.

Casually, in the middle of some idle talk, "Come to think of it, there's many stories like this. Furthermore, the main character is certainly the hero of legend, coming back to the world to save it. If the main character was bleep, at another world bleep, what would happen if he did bleep? Ah, this isn't an H story." When we chatted about such things, sitting with T-sensei and A-sensei, GEG (not geeg, but 'great editor Goto-chin') was strangely favorable.

Then I said, "talk to you again", and the main character was completed en route to the Tokyo line, on the way back home. Even though it was idle chat. In addition there were a lot of jokes. Even though I decided, "This time I'll become a serious author for sure"...

When I started putting in all the details, I was inexperienced in fantasy in any way, and it was very difficult to come up with one name. I wanted to avoid overly exaggerated fantasy-ish (?) names, but would "Hi, John!" fit in a world of swords and magic? Well, I think John is a wonderful name. John Malkovich, John Cusack and John Manjiro are the best. But it's fantasy so, I didn't think it would be easy for a girl to relate easily to naming them... the result is a painful problem, I'll tell you.

Even though I wrote down various things, such coined words don't exist in modern day Japan, a little bit feudal, and yet an equal part strange. There are a lot of strange parts when I read it again. On top of that, I can't easily say it'll be concluded. Because it's a gag! Because calling such a slapstick novel a comedy is presumptuous! Please skim it with an open mind. I aimed for Sam Raimi's direction in "Captain Supermarket"! [1]

Whaaat, I made a gag and survived.

Nonetheless, Matsumoto Temari-san, who was in charge of the illustrations, was different than those other foolish guys and wanted to draw more beautiful characters that were sure to make the heart tremble. Excuse me, Temari-san, I made you do gag pictures. But I think many people picked up this book because of your seductive cover (girl at the sea). It would be nice if everyone all over took it to their rooms. And GEG (thats means Great Editor...), sorry I was always half asleep on the phone. I couldn't grasp most conversations for the first five minutes...

And thus everytime I was contacted with, "It's important!", somehow it became Asaka-san trying to guess right, well, I should say 'sensei'. I'm finally able to register in the same league as Asaka-sensei. There's still a difference in our game stats; it feels like a difference in the tens, where I can't even see the back of my senior, like a mop-up ace in a throwaway match, aiming at the triple crown winner, running at full speed!

I expected to make a more victorious "afterword", but it's unexpectedly quiet and collected. I wonder if it's fine for the novel's postscript to be low-key. Would young ladies check the postscript, see this and put it back on the shelf... But if you like it just a little (or feel so inclined), thank you for buying and reading it. Truly, from the bottom of my heart, thanks. When you close it, if there's even a little something left in your chest, please tell me by all means.

Your words are necessary to create the "Takabayashi Tomo" of the 21rst century.

Takabayashi Tomo

Translation Credit

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